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*University of Windsor*

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**Intolerance, Ignorance, and Insensitivity:**

**An examination of anti-gay attitudes and behaviours  
within a university population**

**by**

**Ken Dowler**

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research  
through the Department of Sociology in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement  
for the Degree of Master of Arts at the University of Windsor**

**Windsor, Ontario, Canada**

**1998**



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## **ABSTRACT**

Negative attitudes towards lesbians and gay men are a fundamental part of mainstream Western society. Although attitudes have modified over the last decade, there is still a considerable number of people who dislike or have negative perceptions of homosexuals or homosexuality. The methodology of this study involved interviewing individuals with negative attitudes towards lesbians and gay men. The purpose of the interview was to understand the “world view” of these individuals. This thesis had two main objectives: First, an examination of a homophobe’s socialization process, attitudes and beliefs and second, an analysis of the varying degrees of anti-gay behaviour that were reported among the subjects. Initially the research involved surveying 569 university students. Twenty students with the most negative attitudes were contacted for an in-depth interview.

The findings of this research suggest that homophobia is constructed around five major attitudes which include: Repulsion, Fear/Discomfort, Moral/Religious Righteousness, Abnormality and Conditional Acceptance. The study further found that these attitudes are influenced by several factors which include language, stereotypes, parents, peers, education, emergence of political correctness, heterosexual hegemony, media, religion and contact with lesbians and gay men. In addition, the study found that there are numerous types of anti-gay behaviour which include : Derision, Avoidance, Written Harassment, Vehicular Harassment, Verbal Harassment and Physical Harassment.

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my late Grandmother Alice Judge, who passed away during the research process.

She supported me unconditionally, despite the many roadblocks and detours that I have created in my life. She would always listen when I encountered any problems or if I just needed to talk. She didn't have many answers, but her genuine love, encouragement and understanding was all that I needed to keep me going.

I feel very fortunate to have been loved by such a sweet, compassionate and special lady, and I miss you very much.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

**Fuck gay rights. Gays should all be put on a fucking island. If they want to be equal. How the fuck can you faggots fight for equality when your not FUCKING EQUAL!! Think about that you fucking queer!**

**-graffiti on bathroom stall at the University of Windsor, CHS Room WG-12, Dec 13/1997**

### **PURPOSE STATEMENT**

The method of this research involved interviewing individuals with negative attitudes towards gay men and lesbians. The purpose of the interview is to understand the "world view" of these individuals. This thesis has two main objectives: First an examination of a homophobe's socialization process, attitudes, and beliefs and second, an analysis of the varying degrees of anti-gay behaviour that were reported among the subjects.

The initial research was conducted in a first year sociology and a first year psychology class in which 569 surveys were completed by 189 male and 380 female university students. After completing the survey (see Appendix A) students were asked to volunteer to be interviewed. A total of 222 (66 male and 156 female) students agreed to be interviewed. Students with the most negative attitudes were contacted for an interview. A total of 20 students (10 male and 10 female) were interviewed for approximately 45 minutes.

In the ensuing text an introduction will examine the problem of anti-gay/lesbian violence and homophobic attitudes. In the second chapter, a review of the pertinent literature on homophobia and anti-gay violence is addressed. The third chapter presents the methodology employed in this research project. The fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters present the results. The seventh chapter provides a discussion and concluding remarks on the results of this research

project.

## **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

The majority of studies on homophobia are quantitative surveys constructed by psychologists. Survey research is too restrictive because surveys rely on highly structured questions which are limited to looking at particular aspects of the subjects' beliefs, attitudes and actions without looking at the context in which these attitudes or behaviour occur. Taken out of context it is easy to misunderstand the meaning of the subject's attitudes or behaviour. This research looks at anti-gay attitudes and behaviour from the subject perspectives. William Marsiglio (1993) suggests that future research should consider how parents, siblings, and peers shape attitudes towards homosexuals. Marsiglio (1993) further suggests that research should examine individual personal experiences with homosexuals and how these experiences shape larger attitudes towards gays and lesbians. This thesis addresses these gaps within the research. It uncovers the influences that shape and define individual attitudes. This research will also examine attitudes from the perspective of the homophobe, rather than a collective presentation of attitudes measured with quantifiable data that has little room for discrepancy, ambivalence, and explanation.

In addition, anti-gay/lesbian violence has been misrepresented, neglected, and diminished in traditional criminological research (Herek, 1989:949). There are reports on the victims but perpetrators of anti-gay/lesbian violence have been neglected in research. It is important to study perpetrators in order to understand their behaviour and to prevent or possibly eliminate anti-gay behaviour from occurring. Furthermore, Gregory Herek (1989:952) states "descriptions of the perpetrators of anti-gay hate crimes and the situations in which they occur are also needed." This

research seeks to uncover the types of anti-gay behaviour and the situations in which they occur, from the perspective of the perpetrator. This research is also unique in that it uncovers female perpetrators and accomplices of anti-gay behaviour. Mary Kite and Bernard Whitley (1998) state that there is need to examine female perpetrators and to examine how anti-gay attitudes and anti-gay behaviours interplay.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

This research is essential as there are very few available accounts of the perpetrators of anti-gay/lesbian violence (Herek, 1989:952). Therefore, a definite need exists for more research on the perpetrators of anti-gay violence or discrimination (Herek, 1989:952). Studies conducted on perpetrators have either been self report surveys (D'Augelli and Rose, 1990; Patel, Long and McCammon, 1995 and Franklin, 1997) or interviews with violent male perpetrators who have a criminal background (Franklin, 1997). This research project is unique as it interviews males and females who had not been arrested or incarcerated at the time of the interview. This research examines the most common types of anti-gay behaviour from the perspective of the subject and gives us the ability to analyze the everyday situations in which anti-gay behaviour occurs.

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

Violence against lesbians and gay men is a disturbing, painful, and frequent phenomenon. Anti-gay/lesbian violence can come in many forms such as murder, physical assault, verbal assault, vandalism, harassment, intimidation, defamation, and discrimination (Herek, 1989:948). Anti-gay/lesbian violence has been documented as a widespread problem (Berrill, 1992:19). Surveys have estimated that 92% of lesbians and gay men have been targets of anti-gay verbal abuse and threats and as many as 24% report physical attacks because of their

sexual orientation (Herek, 1989:948). In a recent Toronto survey 77.5% of the respondents reported being verbally assaulted, 38% were chased or followed and 20.6% were punched or beaten (Faulkner, 1997:40). In examining data from Montreal and Toronto phone lines to report anti-gay violence, Julian Roberts (1995:33) found that "crimes of hate directed against the gay community are more likely to involve violence, or the threat of violence, than hate crimes directed at other groups."

Anti-gay/lesbian violence can be a dehumanizing, demeaning and a terrifying experience for lesbians and gay men. The Canadian Bar Association (1995:5) Committee on Lesbian and Gay Issues and Rights reported that "the degree of brutality against lesbians and gay men can be shocking and serious." For example, Melissa Mertz (as cited in Berrill, 1992:92) director of victim services at Bellevue Hospital in New York states:

Attacks against gay men were the most heinous and brutal I encountered. They frequently involved torture, cutting, mutilation, and beating and showed the absolute intent to rub out the human being because of sexual preference.

The repercussions of anti-gay/lesbian violence are ominous for survivors. Like other crime victims, survivors of anti-gay violence must deal with the effects of victimization. Besides physical injury, crime victims often experience a variety of psychological symptoms which include sleep disturbances and nightmares, headaches, diarrhea, uncontrollable crying, agitation, and restlessness, increased use of drugs and deterioration in personal relationships (Garnets, Herek, and Levy, 1992:208). In anti-gay/lesbian violence the "consequences of victimization converge with those of societal heterosexism to create a unique set of challenges for the survivor" (Garnets, Herek, and Levy:211). For instance, "one's homosexual orientation consequently may be experienced as a source of pain and punishment rather than of intimacy,

love and community" (Garnets, Herek and Levy:213). Furthermore internalized homophobia may emerge or be magnified. Internalized homophobia is the dislike of oneself because of one's homosexuality and is one of the greatest impediments to the mental health of gay and lesbian individuals.

The consequences of physical assault are extreme and difficult to treat, but it is also important to look at victims of verbal assault. Epithets such as "faggot", "dyke", and "queer", and explicit or implicit threats of violence reinforce gay and lesbians as "member(s) of a disliked and devalued minority, and a socially acceptable target for violence" (Garnets, Herek, and Levy:215). Anti-gay/lesbian verbal assault "challenges the victim's routine sense of security and invulnerability, making the world seem more malevolent and less predictable"(Garnets, Herek, and Levy:215). Anti-gay language reinforces heterosexism and its effects should not be minimized. These epithets convey raw hatred and prejudice and encourage the oppression of homosexuals.

Many lesbians and gay men can identify with the fear incited by anti-gay/lesbian violence. This fear can negatively affect the individual and the gay community. Linda Garnets, Gregory Herek, and Barrie Levy (1992) argue that the environment of fear that increases with the threat of anti-gay/lesbian violence influences many lesbians and gay men to conceal their sexual orientation. In turn, being closeted can negatively affect an individual's perception of self worth and his or her ability to form community relationships and networks. In addition, "when lesbians and gay men are closeted, the potential for challenging heterosexist attitudes, prejudice and negative stereotypes that lead to violence is diminished" (Hierlihy, 1996:28). Many lesbians and gay men report that they modify or alter their behaviour to avoid anti-gay attacks (Berrill, 1992,



Faulkner, 1997). Nevertheless, behaviour modification can adversely affect a lesbian or gay man's self esteem. Deborah Hierlihy (1996:28) states that "while there is some evidence that various precautions can reduce the risk of victimization these precautions can erode feelings of self-worth and pride as a lesbian or a gay man."

Violence and harassment against gays and lesbians are particularly damaging during adolescence and young adulthood. Researchers have found that anti-gay violence is common among gay and lesbian college students (D'Augelli, 1992). John Gonsiorek (1988:117) noted "rejection by peers need not be experienced directly in order to be felt keenly. Many gay and lesbian youth observe the treatment of peers and clearly understand what could happen to them if they appear to be, or are known to be different." Anthony D'Augelli (1992) contends that the emotional stress caused by anti-gay/lesbian violence significantly obstructs self-improvement or development. Richard Friedman and Jennifer Downey (1995) observe that this transpires because the young person internalizes the societal message that homosexuality is deviant. Consequently, the young person encounters diminished self-esteem and shame, as well as guilt about preserving a fraudulent image as a heterosexual (if he or she is closeted).

Anti-gay/lesbian violence and harassment is associated with the distinctively high suicide rate among lesbian and gay youth (D'Augelli, 1992). The leading cause of death among young homosexuals is suicide. In a human rights conference held in Banff, Alberta, it was estimated that 30% of young gay men and 20% of young lesbian women either attempt or commit suicide (Calgary Herald, 1990:B5). Anti-gay/lesbian violence is minimized by many right-wing groups and media outlets. They claim that it is an exaggeration by a pro-gay agenda. For instance, in the Alberta Report (an ultra conservative periodical) columnist, Peter Verburg (1995, 1996) has

stated that hate crimes against lesbians and gay men are a "mythical crime" and a "paper crime wave". Verburg has criticized Ottawa criminologist Julian Robert's study of hate crimes. Roberts estimated that 60,000 hate crimes are committed in Canada every year and two-thirds of them go unreported to police. However, Verburg claims that Roberts relied on "statistically dubious information supplied by homosexual activists and other special-interest lobbyists." Verburg further claims that Roberts "jumped firmly aboard the gay rights bandwagon." Verburg's ideas are not contemporary or isolated; some segments of the media have historically constructed gay rights as potentially dangerous and gay activists as politically powerful (Kinsmen, 1996).

Verburg (1996:26) claims that only 11 incidents of gay bashing were reported in Toronto in 1994 and that in 1995 there was no incident of hate crime reported in Edmonton. He further adds that "name-calling was not necessarily criminal". However, Verburg fails to introduce research that shows the vast under reporting of crimes against gays and lesbians. Verburg minimizes the harsh, debilitating effect that taunts, epithets, threats and harassment can have on lesbians and gay men (especially gay youth). Anti-gay/lesbian violence is not a "myth" or "imaginary crime" created and maintained by gay rights activists. It is a real phenomenon that affects a great number of lesbians and gay men as well as their friends and family. It should not be trivialized, underestimated or ridiculed.

## **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Throughout history, anti-gay/lesbian violence has involved individuals, groups and governments. Numerous countries and governments have been involved and are still involved in discrimination, harassment, and violence directed at the gay community. Records of the seventeenth and eighteenth century England, France, and the Netherlands reveal that gatherings

of homosexual men in parks and taverns were met with arrests, tortures, and executions. During the late nineteenth century, the medical profession joined the religious and legal establishment in victimizing gay people. Homosexuality was conceptualized as a mental illness and various "cures" included castration, hysterectomy, lobotomy, drug therapies, and shock treatments (Adam, 1987).

In the 20th century, homosexuals (as well as Jews, Gypsies, political prisoners, and other minority groups) were singled out by the Nazis for persecution and murder. In concentration camps homosexuals often were assigned the most hideous work details and were subject to medical experiments that included castration, hormone injection, mutilation, and exposure. It is estimated that 5,000 to 15,000 gay men died in concentration camps. In the United States homosexuals were branded as security risks and traitors during the anti-Communist hysteria of the McCarthy era and were expelled from the government and military (Adam, 1987).

In Canada, there is a history of state persecution of homosexuals. During 1958, there was a focus on homosexuality as a "security threat" within the government. Homosexuals or suspected homosexuals were designated as risks to national security because they suffered from a "character weakness." As a result between 1956-1963, two-thirds of civil servants who were fired lost their employment because of an alleged character weakness (Kinsmen, 1996:174). In addition, the RCMP and the Armed Forces instituted a policy to fire all homosexuals. The RCMP investigative unit A-3's objective was to "hunt down identify, locate, and purge homosexuals within its own ranks and the government" (Kinsmen, 1996:175). The RCMP collected 9,000 names in 1968 and by 1980 had compiled files on 800,000 Canadians including thousands of lesbians and gay men. It can be argued that the "homosexual witch hunt in Canada

**was much stronger than any campaign against leftists, socialists or communists"**

**(Kinsmen,1996:175). Police surveillance and activity increased with the visibility and expansion of gay bars, clubs, commercial scenes and other gathering places (Kinsmen,1996:228).**

**Subsequently there was an increase in police harassment in cities such as Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. Bruce Somers, first president of the Association for Social Knowledge in Vancouver stated (as cited in Kinsmen,1996:229) "if you were a homosexual you were harassed."**

**One of the most prominent examples of the police persecution of homosexuals was the February 1981 raid on four major Toronto gay bath houses in which approximately 300 officers were involved in the simultaneous raid. The police operation was the biggest raid and largest group arrest since the 1970 FLQ crisis and was the largest mass arrest in Toronto's history. Afterwards the gay community responded with the largest anti-police rally and marches in Toronto's history (Kinsmen,1996).**

**The public outrage to the bathhouse raids forced the police to concentrate their efforts on surveillance and entrapment of gay men allegedly engaged in sex in washrooms. In 1985, over 600 indecent act arrests took place in Toronto. Police action was not limited to Toronto, arrests took place across southern Ontario. In some cases the local media published the men's names and least one man killed himself as a result (Kinsmen,1996:344).**

**The police, courts and the government also focused their attention to gay institutions such as gay bookstores such as the Glad Day book shop. Canada does not apply obscenity laws equally, it unfairly targets same-sex images and texts. In the mid-eighties, Canada Customs escalated its seizure of lesbian and gay materials. Using an internal memorandum that depictions of "buggery/sodomy" were "obscene", Customs routinely seized and refused entry into Canada**

numerous materials destined to gay and lesbian bookstores (Kinsmen, 1996:345).

Although most of Canadian society does not condone violence, the Canadian legal system has been slow to enforce or enact laws or sentences that deter perpetrators of anti-gay violence. A positive step was made when Bill C-41 was passed in June, 1995. Section 718.2 of the Criminal Code states that the court must consider evidence that the offence was motivated with bias, prejudice or hate based on race, nationality, colour, religion, sex, age, mental, or physical disability or the sexual orientation of the victim. Consequently, the perpetrator of a hate crime could be given a harsher sentence. Nevertheless, there was considerable debate over the sexual orientation provision. The Reform party in particular, equated this clause in the bill as giving homosexuals "special rights". Liberal MP Roseanne Skoke (as cited in Verburg, 1995:9) declared the bill would give homosexuals "special legal status, allow them to redefine the family, to enter into the realm of the sanctity of marriage, to adopt children, to infiltrate the curriculum of schools and to impose an alternative lifestyle on youth." In a House of Commons debate (June, 14, 1995) Reform MP Jack Ramsay claimed that "the Criminal code, the law of this land, is not the place for the government to be making politically correct statements." Critics of the bill also claimed that it would lead to a decriminalization of pedophilia. Gary Kinsmen (1996:336) contends that groups such as Renaissance and Positive Parents have made use of socially constructed images of homosexuals as child molesters and murderers. Opponents of gay rights continue to use "protection of children" from homosexuals as a rallying point for anti-gay rhetoric.

The mass media is guilty of printing fraudulent stories about gay bashing. In the Vancouver Sun (1995:A12), Reform MP Paul Forseth stated that gay men were the perpetrators

of gay bashing. Forseth claimed that gay men are more likely to get roughed up inside Vancouver gay bars than on the streets. Forseth stated "That's my guess, yes, especially where you have alcohol and drugs and mix that with very short term relationships and all the jealousies." Forseth argued that gay bashing was exaggerated and needed no special legislation (Bill C-41). He further stated that gays "were placing themselves at risk...that one kind of marginalized group (skinheads) doing its thing against another marginalized subgroup (homosexuals), which essentially has nothing to do with human rights before the law...It's purely one gang going against another gang." The newspaper article had only one sentence to dispute his views. The reporter produced no facts that conclusively presented Forseth as ill-informed in his views on gay bashing. In general the media often ignores the issue, for example, after prominent gay politician Duncan Wilson was brutally attacked, Phillip Hannan (as cited in Cernetig, 1995:A14) a spokesman of AIDS Vancouver stated "Gay bashing has been going on for years...We in the community find it interesting that it's only when it's a public figure that it gets all the media attention."

So far the analysis has examined negative attitudes that inhere in the realm of the state and the media, it is also important to explore the condition of homosexuals in the workplace. The status of homosexuals in the workplace is very precarious; the workplace is considered a heterosexual sphere. It is a place where men can prove their manhood. Among males there is a difference in class; the blue collar worker achieves manliness through being a "breadwinner" earning enough to support a wife and a child. The white collar worker achieves manliness through corporate power, professional recognition and high earnings (Levine, 1995:212). Gay men run into many obstacles in confronting this test of masculinity. Heterosexism has prevented

many homosexuals from obtaining good jobs. Heterosexism propels many gay men into non-prestigious, low paying, white collar or service jobs which are collectively judged as inappropriate for men. Many people in society favour banning gay men from certain types of employment, such as jobs traditionally done by men. They disapprove of gay men working as judges, doctors, police officers, and government officials. Also, there is disapproval of gay men working in jobs that could involve children such as the clergy, teachers, principals, and camp counselors (Levine, 1995:213). There is the belief that homosexual workers are "swishy pansies and debauched lechers and they therefore believe that homosexual workers would dress like women and sexually harass people on the job" (Levine:213). Conversely, public opinion polls show that Americans approve of homosexuals working as artists, beauticians, musicians, florists, and retail clerks. These jobs have been classified as "sissy work" (Levine, 1995:213).

It is also salient to examine the experience of lesbians in the workforce. A woman's "job depends on her pretending to be not merely heterosexual, but a heterosexual woman in terms of dressing and playing the feminine, deferential role required of 'real women' (Rich, 1993:235). Women in the workforce suffer from an unacceptable amount of sexual harassment. For example, it is estimated 1.2 million women in Canada believe that they have been sexually harassed (Aggerwal, 1992:7). It can be argued that women are being punished for entering the workforce, which is 'traditionally' considered a male realm. Many women who occupy traditional male roles in the workforce or society are stereotyped as "mannish" or as a "butch". Lesbians are dually oppressed through sexism and homophobia.

Negative attitudes towards gay men and lesbians are prevalent in Canadian society. An Environics poll conducted in 1986 found that homosexual behaviour was only found acceptable

by 10 %, somewhat acceptable by 22%, not very acceptable by 20% and not acceptable at all by 42% (Rayside and Bowler, 1988:658). Although opinions and attitudes have modified over the last decade, recent polls reveal support for gay rights, but stop at giving gay men and lesbians the same rights as heterosexuals. For instance, in an Angus Reid poll, 59% of those surveyed said Ottawa should amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to give gay men and lesbians legal protection from discrimination (Bryden, 1996:A1). However, Canadians appear to disapprove of homosexual marriage, adoption and same-sex benefits. For example, an Angus Reid poll suggests that 60% of Canadians oppose legislation giving spousal benefits and adoption rights to homosexual couples (Gold, 1994:A4). In Ontario an Environics poll showed that 67% agreed that homosexual couples should not adopt children and of these 57% strongly agreed. In addition, 55% opposed redefining the terms "spouse" or "family" (Walker, 1994:A1). In another Gallup poll only 24% of Canadians favoured same-sex marriages. The poll showed that 61% were opposed while 14% offered no opinion (Gallup Canada, 1992). Although public opinion towards gays and lesbians has been more positive in recent years, there is still a vast number of Canadians who favour excluding lesbians and gay men from the same privileges and rights that heterosexuals enjoy. It is within this heterosexist climate that research is needed on individual negative attitudes towards gay men and lesbians and the behaviour that can be the result.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter has two main objectives. First I will present the research that has been conducted on homophobic attitudes. Second I will briefly examine the literature pertaining to perpetrators of anti-gay/lesbian violence.

#### **HOMOPHOBIA**

I think that a homophobic is someone who is scared about sexuality because they are not informed. Their opinions are loosely based. Based on stupid things and that is why I put it that I am not a homophobe because I am not scared of homosexuality and I am not scared of people who are homosexuals. I just don't agree with it. <sup>1</sup>

Homophobia is a term first coined by George Weinberg (1972) to define the fear felt by heterosexuals when in near proximity to lesbians and gay men. However, many scholars argue that homophobia is considerably more complex than the definition implies. Gregory Herek (1986) believes that the term "phobia" is problematic because it implies that individual prejudice is based predominantly on fear and that this fear is irrational and dysfunctional. Herek (1986:564) argues that homophobia is "very functional for individuals who manifest it." Robert Connell (1995:40) notes that "homophobia is not just an attitude. Straight men's hostility to gay men involves real social practice, ranging from discrimination through media vilification to imprisonment and sometimes murder."

Another problem with the term homophobia is that it is seen as an individual process. Ken Plummer (1981:62) states that homophobia "reinforces the idea of mental illness, ... it neglects women, ... it directs away from sexual oppression in general and, it individualizes the

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<sup>1</sup> Female Subject #13

entire problem.” Homophobia is ingrained at both the individual and societal levels. Michael Kaufman (1995:20) states “homophobia is not merely an individual phobia, although the strength of homophobia varies from individual to individual. It is a socially constructed phobia that is essential for the imposition and maintenance of masculinity.” In addition, Kinsmen (1996:33) states that homophobia “individualizes and privatizes gay and lesbian oppression and obscures the social relations that organize it from social contexts and reproducing all the problems of psychological definitions.” The idea of the naturalness of heterosexuality and the sickness of homosexuality is organized through social relations. They are not simply unprogressive individual beliefs but are the result of heterosexual hegemony. Nevertheless, Kinsmen (1996:34) notes that homophobia “can be seen as a particularly virulent response organized by heterosexist discourse and practice.”

There has been much disagreement over the conceptualization of the term ‘homophobia’ and as a result the terms heterosexism and heteronormativity have been introduced into the analysis of anti-gay attitudes. Heterosexism is defined as “an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behaviour, identity, relationship, or community” (Herek, 1992b:89). Barry Adam (1998:2) remarks that heterosexism “offers a more sociological notion of something structured, institutional, and material, as well as ideological.” Adam states that the term heterosexism has come under scrutiny by poststructuralists because of its structuralist origins. As a result poststructuralists in the form of queer theory have introduced the notion of ‘heteronormativity’. Heteronormativity is the view that institutionalized heterosexuality legitimizes and directs human social and sexual categorizations. Adam (1998:3) states that “for queer theory, the issue is not one of appealing for tolerance or acceptance for a

quasi-ethnic, twentieth century, urban community but of deconstructing the entire heterosexual-homosexual binary complex that fuels the distinction in the first place.” Queer theorists argue that the binary opposition of homosexuality and heterosexuality creates and promotes the concept of homophobia. Ki Nameste (1996) proposes a poststructuralist queer theory that studies the “emergence and reproduction of heterosexuality.” A poststructuralist sociology would attempt to understand heterosexuality as a social construct, as opposed to selecting gays, lesbians, and/or bisexuals as the only subjects or communities worthy of investigation. The goal is to understand the ideology of heterosexuality which creates and maintains the boundaries of sexuality. The ideology of heterosexuality affects gays, lesbians, heterosexuals, bisexuals and/or transgendered. Despite the debate over the terms of anti-gay attitudes, there are several sociological theories that examine homosexuality and its opposition that are useful in understanding the constructs homophobia, heterosexism and heteronormativity. These theories include Structural (Feminist and Comparative), Gender Panic (Queer theory) and Socio-Historical theories.

### **Structural Theories**

Structural theories examine how societies are organized and arranged. The term heterosexism is based in social structures or institutions and is organized within societal practices and beliefs. Structural theories examine how homosexuality and anti-homosexuality are inherent in a particular social setting or social arrangement. In respect to homophobic attitudes the main concern of structural theorists is the issue of male dominance. The notion is that homophobia attitudes are the result of patriarchy which encourages male supremacy and

privilege over females. As a result the theories that are important to examine are Feminist and Comparative theories. These theories examine the organization of entire societies.

### **Feminist Theories**

Feminist theorists contend that the focal point of homophobia is centered around the issue of male dominance. The notion is that heterosexuality is invented by males to dominate and control female sexuality and reproductive power. Males are coerced into heterosexual conduct, in order to reap the benefits of women's reproductive power and to maintain a position of power over women and the family. Adam (1998:5) claims that inherent in feminist theories is the idea that

heterosexuality is re-created each generation in a system of fraternal interest groups that exercise control over women's reproductive power in families. Homosexuality among men and among women runs up against different but related sources of opposition. Homosexuality among men abstains from or transgresses the fundamental social 'game plan' of the fraternal interest group to acquire, control, and trade in the reproductive power of women. The sexuality of women in such a system is put at the disposal of men; their own sexual preferences are largely precluded.

As a result feminist theorists conclude that lesbianism is a uprising against male domination and control. Monique Wittig (1992) contends that lesbianism "is a revolt of the trade goods in the traffic of women." She claims that female homosexuality violates patriarchy by declaring choice and individuality for females as opposed to male dominance and authority. Adrienne Rich's (1993) important work, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" examines heterosexuality as a political institution which disempowers women. Rich's intention was to deconstruct feminist theory. Rich posits that feminist theory located heterosexuality as "normal" and lesbianism as "deviant." Rich (1993:235) claims sexual inequality is compelled by

**the power of men to deny women's sexuality or forcing it upon them; to command or exploit their labour to control their produce; to control and rob them of their children; to confine them physically and prevent their movement; to use them as objects in male transactions; to cramp their creativeness; to withhold from them large areas of the societies knowledge and cultural attainments.**

**However, Rich asserts that male control goes beyond sexual inequality and further enforces heterosexuality upon women. Rich claims that lesbianism is considered deviant and rendered invisible by an expansive placement of a "cultural apparatus" that includes the mass media and science. She claims that compulsive heterosexuality is enforced by laws, economics, public policy, a culture of heterosexual romance, pornography, female sexual slavery, and violence towards women who deviate. Rich argues that the lesbian existence is marred by compulsory heterosexuality which denies sexual equality and promotes anti-lesbian sentiment.**

**Nevertheless, there are some criticisms of a feminist stance of homophobia. Adam (1998:6) argues that "the cultural feminist approach tends to lose the comparative and variable aspect of structuralism by reifying patriarchy into a transhistorical essence." It is important to examine patriarchy as constantly fluctuating over time and as variable to different societies. In other words, it is important to examine patriarchy as a social construction that is determined by variations in social environment**

**Another criticism of feminist viewpoint is that it fails to address homophobia directed towards men (Adam, 1998). However, Adam (1998:6) claims that the feminist viewpoint "offers a strong sense of the way in which anti-lesbianism is built in social structure." The feminist view of anti-lesbianism is important in understanding misogyny, which is a fundamental component of any patriarchal society. Thus, anti-lesbianism and misogyny become interchangeable components of a patriarchal social structure.**

## **Comparative Theories**

Adam (1998) contends that in order to procure an insight into homophobia, it is important to examine homosexuality cross-culturally. Adam (1998:8) states that “an older generation of theories of homophobia foundered on its reliance on single, often ethnocentric, definitions of what homosexuality is or means.” Structural theories imply that social constructions of gender and sexuality are unsteady and yet they are affixed in larger “sociologies.” Sexuality is organized, structured, regulated, and molded in all societies and anthropological and historical research literature suggests that sexual formations are indexed into a few common patterns (Adam, 1998:9). One pattern is the solid regulation and restriction of sexuality which controls the maintenance and creation of anti-homosexual practice and bias. For example, Adam (1998:9) states that in kinship based social systems homosexual relationships may be “marginalized as irrational, subversive or inconsequential to the predominant social code.” However, some societies (Melanesian, Australian, Amazonian) based in kinship systems also promoted homosexuality. Adam (1998:9) states that “clearly homophobia in this instance is scarcely the issue; it is those who desire or elope with members of the wrong clan who are the queers of these societies.” Adam (1998:10) also cites the example of age-defined relationships, where the fundamental difference is not homosexual/heterosexual but the difference in age. For example an adult male in Ancient Rome was allowed to take a younger male lover but it was expected that he take an aggressive sexual role.

## **Gender Panic Theories**

In gender panic theories, the assumption is that failure in meeting gender role expectations leads to feelings of insecurity, and inadequacy (Herek, 1990). Gender panic theories are based in psychoanalytic roots. They are based in the Oedipus complex which in Freudian theory is the young child's intense desire to replace the parent of the same sex and enjoy the affections of the opposite sex parent. The Oedipus complex is resolved when the child recognizes that their same-sex parent might punish them for their incestuous wishes. To reduce this conflict, the child identifies with the same-sex parent, striving to be like him or her. Psychologists have claimed that homophobia among males is the result of children's separation and individuation from mothers that occur in the pre-oedipal period. Fundamentally, they hold that the difficulties of separation and individuation in childhood can render individuals to subscribe to homophobia attitudes. They argue that problems encountered in the pre-oedipal stage, will produce homophobic males. Separation and individuation is associated with a boy's sense of his maleness or his gender identity. As the boy matures, the sense of maleness is further accentuated by biological hormonal factors, his own interpretations, and cultural or societal contributions of the male identity (Young-Bruehl, 1996:149). Elizabeth Young Bruehl (1996:149) asserts that many psychologists "believe that a boy's gender identity is typically less secure than a girl's because it involves as hers does not, disidentification with the mother." Thus, for males homophobia and disassociation of anything feminine is stimulated "by archaic fears of being merged with or not individuated from their mother, fears of being female." (Young-Bruehl, 1996:149).

Young-Bruehl (1996:148) contends that psychoanalyst Richard Isay “has even argued that fear of homosexuals per se is secondary in homophobic men to their fear and hatred of what they perceive as feminine in other men and in themselves.” In Western culture, males are conditioned to be dominant, tough, aggressive and “that no real man should be feminine or homosexual.” (Young-Bruehl, 1996:148). Males in society are especially linked to the concept of masculinity and suffer extreme consequences for failing to live out the prescribed male gender role. Adam (1998:10) claims that within the gender panic theoretical framework “{masculinity} is an achieved and insecure status. Defensiveness against losing the male status and privilege generates homophobia.”

### **Queer Theory**

Queer theorists rely heavily on psychoanalytic models of human behaviour and subscribe to gender panic theoretical framework. Queer theory is tied to the Gender Panic framework because both locate the problem in psychological contentions and the pressures of masculinity. Adam (1998:10) contends that queer theorists, Judith Butler (1990), Eve Sedgwick (1990), and Mark Simpson (1994) reason “that heterosexual masculinity builds itself precisely through the simultaneous exploitation and denial of homosexuality.” Butler (1990) claims that for males the idea of femininity is “unthinkable and unnamable.” Sedgwick (1990:185) contends that male exploitation and denial of homosexuality is a “normal condition of male heterosexual entitlement.” Diane Fuss (1991:6) maintains that “the fear of homo, which continually rubs up against the hetero (tribadic style), concentrates and codifies the very real possibility and ever present threat of a collapse of boundaries [homo/heterosexual binary], an effacing of limits, and a radical confusion of identities.” In other words, there is a fear that “gender bending” or



modifying gender identities/roles would be harmful for males who inherit a power position in patriarchal societies. Adam (1998:11) declares that “the very structure of male heterosexual identity contains a tightly wound coil ready to be triggered against homosexual threat or temptation.” Barry Adam (1994:111) parallels masculine heterosexual identity with the image of an American male soldier. Adam states that the male soldier’s very being is contingent upon “his ability to show violence” and that failure to meet these expectations result in “taunts of ‘little girl’ or ‘faggot’.” Thus, for queer theorists, masculinity is inextricably linked with the notion of anti-femininity. For queer theorists, homophobia is not an individual phenomenon that is rooted in personal pathology, but is part of ‘normal’ male behaviour, that is encouraged by heteronormativity. In other words, central to the male identity is the conception that homosexuality and femininity must be denied and males that exhibit any signs of homosexuality or femininity must be subject to taunts and ultimately rejected.

The central theme of Queer theory is the deconstruction of the hetero/homosexual binary. “Heterosexuality has meaning only in relation to its opposite, homosexuality; the coherence that the former is built on depends on the exclusion and repression of the latter. The hetero/homosexual symbolic coupling forms a mutually interdependent, hierarchical relation of meaning” (Seidman, 1997: 133). Eve Sedgwick (1990:1) “proposes that many of the major nodes of thought and knowledge in twentieth-century Western culture as a whole are structured , indeed, fractured, by a chronic, now endemic crisis of homo/heterosexual definition. Diane Fuss (1991:1) argues that “to the extent that the denotation of any term is always dependent on what is exterior to it (heterosexuality, for example, typically defines itself in critical opposition to that which it is not: homosexuality), the inside/outside polarity is an indispensable model for helping

us to understand the complicated workings of semiosis.” Fuss (1991) believes that it is necessary to deconstruct boundaries which are at the core of human power and knowledge. Sedgwick (1990) argues that queer theory is not a minority theory, but can be viewed as an useful theory in the organization of cultural symbols and patterns.

Nevertheless, there are four criticisms of queer theory. First, queer theory excludes other theories of human action because it relies on psychoanalytic models. Queer theorists believe that the root of the problem is in the gender roles which are ingrained during childhood. Adam (1998:12) states that Freudian models present “a singular, essentialist vision of human motivation that fails to recognize cross-cultural or intra-cultural variation. Second, queer theory does not adequately address the issue of anti-lesbianism. Third, despite an intention to deconstruct the homosexual/heterosexual binary, queer theory tends to reify the constructs homosexual/heterosexual as well as the constructs of masculine/feminine. Fourth, by attempting to deconstruct the homosexual/heterosexual binary there is a danger that gays and lesbians will lose collective identities and mobilizations. Adam (1998:12) argues that the deconstruction of the heterosexual/homosexual binary “is a strategy that tends toward a premature denial or erasure of gay and lesbian identities in a world where homosexual subjectivity remains a necessary part of practical resistance to heterosexist hegemony.”

### **Socio-Historical Theories**

It is important to examine gender and sexuality by examining socio-historical theories in order to examine the historical formation of contemporary gay, lesbian, and bisexual communities and their opponents. A study of history provides strong examples of the changing definition of homosexuality over different times periods and different societies. An examination

of postmodernism is essential because anti-gay sentiment emerges out of anti-modernist view points (Adam,1998:13). Postmodernism is the rejection of modernism. Modernism refers to the basic assumptions, beliefs, and values that arose in the enlightenment era. Postmodernism seeks to deconstruct or tear apart these ideals of empiricism, science and progress. Postmodernism seeks to reveal the internal or hidden structures of society.

Adam (1998:14) contends that capitalism replaced kinship in the areas of production, distribution and consumption. As a consequence several new concepts emerged or modified such as the status of women, the family structure, marriage roles and customs, sexuality, and the emergence of gay and lesbian worlds. Adam (1998:14) argues that “both the organization of the contemporary gay and lesbian worlds, as well as its opposition, are inextricably associated with modernity.” Modernity is associated with enlightenment, reason and freedom. However the advent of modernity produced negative consequences for gays and lesbians, because with the emergence of gay and lesbian identities, there emerged “reactionary social forces aimed at reinforcing the pre-eminence of traditional morality and culture.” Religious doctrines play a role in the official morality and culture of nation states that emerged in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century. These religious views are laced with anti-gay ideology and sentiment. As a result, homosexuals are marked as different and labeled as “apart” from society. Adam (1998:14-15) states that traditional elites are threatened by homosexuals who are viewed as a “sign of decadence and chaos”. The traditional elites reject modernity as a dangerous ideology that threatens the dominant social order.

The early gay and lesbian movements aligned themselves with enlightenment values of science, humanism, democracy, freedom and secularization. However, postmodernists claim that

modernity is associated with the rise of the modern state and its many apparatuses which includes sexual regulation. Adam (1998:16) argues that modern nation states invented the policing of sexuality and that the state is particularly virulent in their persecution of gays and lesbians in times of war, internal unrest and economic downturns.

### **Empirical Research on Homophobia**

There have been numerous studies conducted on homophobic attitudes. Most of the research has involved college students and psychological surveys. The results vary, however, there are a few commonalities.

First, in many of the studies it has been shown that males are more homophobic than females (Herek, 1988; Kurdek, 1988; D'Augelli and Rose, 1990; Van de Ven, 1994; Kerns and Fine, 1994; D'Augelli and Hershberger, 1995; Kite and Whitley, 1998). However, John Kerns and Mark Fine (1994) found that both male and female participants had more negative attitudes towards gay men than lesbians. However, other studies have shown that males hold less negative attitudes towards lesbians while females hold similar attitudes towards both lesbians and gay men (Louderback and Whitley, 1997). It has been postulated that men's less negative attitudes towards lesbians are partly the result of the erotic image of lesbianism (Louderback and Whitley, 1997).

Second, there are findings that show that individuals who subscribe to traditional male and female roles tend to be more homophobic (Britton, 1990; Marsiglio, 1993; Agnew, Thompson, and Smith, 1993). Mary Kite and Bernard Whitley (1998) state that this is based in "a broader belief system about women, men, and their appropriate roles." The consequences are that gender-associated beliefs are inextricably linked which leads individuals to label men who

appear feminine as gay, and women who appear masculine are labeled as lesbian. In addition, individuals who engage in behaviour or possess characteristics associated with the other sex are viewed negatively. Individuals who hold traditional gender role attributes hold particularly hostile responses to gender bending (Kite and Whitley, 1998).

Third, there are findings that suggest that individuals who are politically conservative, religious, older, and less educated tend to hold more anti-homosexual attitudes (Britton, 1990; Seltzer, 1992; Marsiglo, 1993; Agnew, Thompson, Smith, 1993). Christopher Agnew, Vaida Thompson, and Valerie Smith (1993) found that individuals are more likely to be homophobic if their parents (who they are psychologically close to) hold negative attitudes towards homosexuals. This was especially true if they were raised in family environments which stressed morality and religion, but lacked intellectual and cultural emphases. In addition, Agnew, Thompson, and Smith (1993) found that individuals who were in relatively stable family units are more likely to have homophobic attitudes.

Fourth, individuals who have high authoritarian beliefs are more homophobic (Agnew, Thompson, and Smith, 1993; Haddock and Zanna, 1998). Authoritarians "are strongly self-righteous individuals who maintain a strong acceptance of traditional values and norms, possess a general willingness to submit to legitimate authority and display a general tendency to aggress against others." Geoffrey Haddock and Mark Zanna (1998) found that high authoritarians were more likely to express negative stereotypes. Conversely Agnew, Thompson, and Smith (1993) found that individuals with open, non-dogmatic, and agreeable dispositions were less homophobic

## **ANTI-GAY/LESBIAN VIOLENCE**

Gregory Herek (1992b:89) claims that heterosexism permeates society and anti-gay/lesbian violence is a "rational", albeit, drastic extension of heterosexism. Herek (1992b:89) defines heterosexism as "an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behaviour, identity, relationship, or community." The ostracizing of homosexuals and homosexuality is culturally transmitted through societal institutions such as religion, law, psychiatry, and the mass media (Herek, 1992b:90). By rejecting and stigmatizing homosexuality, heterosexism creates the conditions and circumstances under which lesbians and gay men can be routinely victimized. In addition, anti-gay/lesbian language contributes to the heterosexism that is prevalent in society (Garnets et al, 1992:215).

Cultural heterosexism does not account for the variability of individual attitudes towards homosexuality. Therefore, in order to understand the motivations of a perpetrator of anti-gay/lesbian violence one must examine psychological heterosexism, which is the manifestation of heterosexism within individual attitudes and actions (Herek, 1992a:151). Herek (1992a) believes it is necessary to show how the actions of anti-gay/lesbian violence serve psychological functions for the perpetrator. These functions can either be Experiential-Schematic or Expressive. Experiential-Schematic are derived directly from past negative experiences with gay males or lesbians (Van de Ven, 1995:20). Paul Van de Ven (1995) studied thirty-one juvenile offenders to test Herek's model. He asked the subjects structured questions on their attitudes towards homosexuals and conducted a content analysis to determine the possible functions served by juvenile offender attitudes towards homosexuality. Van de Ven (1995:26) found six items that supported the Experiential-Schematic function. Some of the juvenile offenders

believed that past negative experiences with homosexuals were the reason why they harassed or attacked lesbians and gay men.

According to Herek (1992a) there are three expressive functions that serve to motivate offenders: value-expressive, social expressive, and ego-defensive violence. Value-expressive violence provides a means for attackers to enact meaningful values that are the core for their self-concepts (Herek, 1992a:159). Van de Ven (1995:29) found five items in his interviews that supported the value-expressive function and that the participant anti-homosexual attitudes "were based on a concern to safeguard the civil liberties of all people (heterosexual) in society or on personal moral beliefs about how things should be."

Social expressive violence is when the perpetrator (who is a member of an in-group) clearly distinguishes gay and lesbians as an out-group and attacks them. An in-group is the group to which individuals believe that they have membership. An out-group is a social group with which individuals compare their own in-group and make judgments. An incident of anti-gay/lesbian violence can help in-group members feel more positive about their group and consequently improve their self-esteem. Thus, perpetrators of anti-gay/lesbian violence may be motivated by needs to maintain status and affiliation with their peers.

Social identity theory maintains that individuals desire positive self-esteem, and their self-esteem is connected to the way their in-group is evaluated relative to other groups. Individuals can belong to many in-groups; the in-group that is deemed most important is due to situational factors. The number of out-groups with which one might compare oneself is numerous. It is important to look at situational factors when looking at which out-group is deemed most important at a given time or place. Because of heterosexism, lesbians and gay men

may be regarded as the out-group by any one who considers themselves as heterosexual, notwithstanding their affiliation in other in-groups (Hamner, 1992:180). Being able to institute and preserve a positive group image, compared with that of an out-group, leads to high in-group status and consequently, an increase in personal self-esteem among in-group members. Consequently, groups of young males (in-group) attack lesbians and gay men (out-group) to perpetuate a positive group image and elevate personal self-esteem (Hamner:1992).

In ego-defensive violence, anti-gay/lesbian violence can supply a means for young males to validate their heterosexuality or masculinity by assaulting a person who signals an unacceptable facet of their own personalities. Van de Ven (1995:26) found evidence that "the participant's attitudes were based on personal feelings of discomfort or revulsion of homosexuality." It is important to note that in many anti-gay/lesbian assaults that perpetrators have multiple motives based on experiential-schematic, value-expressive, social expressive and ego-defensive. These multiple motivations are more likely to occur within young perpetrators of street crime (Herek, 1992a:162).

There are some suggestions that anti-gay prejudice is "based on traditional sex role attitudes transmitted by parents" (Ehlrich, 1992:106). It can be argued that anti-gay/lesbian violence is expected or acceptable behaviour for an adolescent male who socializes with other males based on the fact that most boys are taught at a very early age to conform to gender roles (Comstock, 1991:93). For instance, little boys are taught to be aggressive and to display masculine traits. If boys do not display these traits they may be labeled as "sissies" or "fairies". One of the most common forms of anti-gay violence is the beating of effeminate boys who are suspected as being gay. Howard Ehlrich (1992:117) reports that a lot of beatings occur in



childhood, because the boys do not conform to the extremely rigid rules of the male gender role. Furthermore, definitions of gender are continued in adolescence and early adulthood. Groups of young males learn that masculinity is the most prized trait for males. In this environment anti-gay/lesbian violence may be perceived as a popular and positive means to prove one's masculinity.

Van de Ven (1995:27-28) found that juvenile offenders (the majority of which either engaged or had the potential to engage in anti-gay/lesbian violence) had many justifications for the violence or harassment of homosexuals. These justifications aid in understanding the possible motivations of perpetrators or potential perpetrators. They included the idea that homosexuals may approach them for sexual favours; concern about public display, the notion that they feel discomfort about openly gay men and women in public; concern about homosexual's negative impact on society; the idea that homosexuals will damage society; concern about the children, that is the notion that children will be targets of homosexuals; concerns about the spread of AIDS; concern about older men being gay, that is the idea that older men prey on younger men; and the assertion that homosexuality is unnatural, sick and disgusting.

Van de Ven (1995) also found eight myths or stereotypes that juvenile offenders held towards homosexuals and homosexuality. They included that : homosexuals are too visible in public; homosexuality is sick and unnatural; homosexuals have particular modes of dress, speech, appearance and mannerisms; homosexuals are coercive in areas of sexuality; homosexuals try to seduce children; everyone should have the same sexual orientation (heterosexuality); older gay men are a particular concern; and that homosexuals were responsible

for the spread of AIDS.

However, not all persons who are heterosexist/homophobic commit anti-gay/lesbian violence or harassment. Perpetrators of anti-gay/lesbian violence are generally young males who act in groups (Comstock, 1991; Faulkner, 1997; Berrill, 1992). Evidence suggests that a youth's participation in anti-gay/lesbian violence is enhanced by the group or gang. Gary Comstock (1991:117) declares that anti-gay incidents "often precede or follow socializing with peers, such as partying or hanging out." Comstock (1991:117) found that "incidents occurred during out of school hours in which teenagers typically socialize, especially on weekend and summer evenings," Comstock (1991:255) states that most perpetrators of anti-gay attacks give the reason that they were "going along with the crowd" or "because everyone else was doing it." In other instances the incident is seen as good clean recreational fun that young males engage in, thus minimizing the harm done to the victim. Thus, for many perpetrators gay bashing is seen as a sport performed in the company of peers.

This group mentality can be related to a phenomenon referred to as "group think". Irving Janis (1972) defined this process as a limited understanding of some issue due to group conformity. Janis argues that group decision making sometimes backfires. First, rather than questioning a problem from many points of view, groups often seek consensus, thereby narrowing the options. Second, groups may develop a distinctive language, adopting terms and single interpretations of events. Third, having settled on a position, members of the group may come to see anyone with another view as the opposition. Consequently, groups of gay bashers do not view their actions or behaviours as illegal or immoral activity but as a necessary and legitimate activity.

Furthermore, when the assault or harassment is performed in groups and there is little risk of retaliation or being injured. Joseph Harry (1992:115) views this aspect of gay bashing as a viable option to increase the status needs of the immature male. Harry (1992:114) states:

I suggest that most anti-gay violence arises out of male groups in their late adolescence or early twenties. For many persons, the period of adolescence constitutes a moral holiday during which bonds to adult moral order are attenuated by involvement in an adolescent subculture, the principle emphases of which are hedonism and autonomy.

Comstock (1991:116) found that adolescents like to think their negative views of homosexuality are their own and separate from their parents views. The adolescent tries to be autonomous from parents by physically brutalizing and verbally attacking homosexuals, whereas, adults verbally stigmatize and discriminate against homosexuals. Thus, autonomy can be viewed as a plausible motive for anti-gay/lesbian violence.

In his victimization survey, Comstock (1991:67) found that 13% of victims were misled by the perpetrators of anti-gay violence. In Greg Kelner's study (1983:43-44) eleven out of twenty respondents reported that incidents included entrapment or the "deliberate use of seduction or enticement" by the perpetrator. Perpetrators who choose to seek out homosexuals as victims know precisely where to find a vulnerable target. In many instances the perpetrators are "cruising" in cars looking for people to verbally insult and throw objects at (Faulkner, 1997). Nevertheless, many incidents of anti-gay/lesbian violence are spontaneous, reflexive, and unplanned. For instance, Ellen Faulkner (1997) found that lesbians and gay men were most likely to be harassed or threatened on the street. Furthermore, lesbians and gay men are targets for anti-gay/lesbian violence in ordinary circumstances of school, work and life (Faulkner, 1997:18).

In her study of perpetrators of anti-gay violence, Karen Franklin (1997) found four distinct motivations: Self-Defense, Ideology, Thrill-Seeking and Peer Dynamics. Self-Defense is when the perpetrator claims that he/she was responding to sexual propositions. Ideology is when the perpetrator claims that they assaulted because of their negative beliefs and attitudes towards homosexuality. They view themselves as social norm enforcers who are punishing moral transgressions. Thrill-Seekers claim that the incident was for fun and that it sustained a need for excitement; they minimize and depict incidents as amusing. Peer Dynamics aims at proving toughness and heterosexuality to friends. Franklin (1997) found that males were more likely to endorse these themes.

## **EMPIRICAL STUDIES: VICTIMIZATION SURVEYS**

There have been numerous victimization surveys done on anti-gay/lesbian violence. These surveys demonstrate that anti-gay/lesbian violence is a real problem for gays and lesbians. The victimization surveys cover a number of areas including: types and rates of victimization; knowledge/fear of victimization and behaviour modification; profile of victims; profile of perpetrator; gender differences in victimization; and the reporting of victimization.

### **TYPES AND RATES OF VICTIMIZATION**

Across a number of surveys, Kevin Berrill (1992) found anti-gay harassment and violence to be widespread and growing. In the victimization surveys Berrill (1992) found that 52% to 87% of the respondents were harassed; 21% to 27% had objects thrown at them; 13% to 38% had been chased or followed; 10% to 20% experienced vandalism; 9% to 24% were physically assaulted; and 4% to 10% experienced an assault with an object or weapon.

In a survey of gay and lesbian college students, D'Augelli (1992) found that 77% of respondents had been verbally insulted, 49% had experienced verbal insults more than once; 27% had been threatened with physical violence (7% more than once); 13% had personal property damaged or destroyed; 8% had objects thrown at them; 22% reported being chased or followed once or more; 5% reported being punched, kicked, beaten and spat on.

In Canadian surveys, rates of victimization are similar.(see Table 1) Faulkner (1997) compared her Toronto study with three other surveys that were conducted in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Vancouver. These Canadian surveys found that 72% to 85% of respondents were verbally assaulted; 35% to 54% were threatened with violence; 33% to 41% were chased or followed; 17% to 27% had objects thrown at them; 9% to 17.4% were spit at; 16% to 32.6% were punched or beaten; 7.3% to 11.5% were assaulted with a weapon; and 18% to 20.6% were harassed by police.

**Table 1            Comparison of Canadian Surveys**

	<b>Toronto 1996</b>	<b>Nova Scotia 1993</b>	<b>New Brunswick 1990</b>	<b>Vancouver 1995</b>
<b>Total Sample</b>	368	294	176	420
<b>Females</b>	181	133	51	122
<b>Males</b>	171	161	125	298
<b>Verbal Assault %</b>	77.5	72	82	85
<b>Threatened with Violence %</b>	50.8	42	35	54
<b>Chased/Followed %</b>	37.6	33	34	41
<b>Objects thrown %</b>	25.8	25	17	27
<b>Spit at %</b>	17.4	9	10	--
<b>Punched/ Beaten %</b>	20.6	18	16	32.6
<b>Assault with weapon %</b>	7.3	--	--	11.5
<b>Harassed by police</b>	20.6	18.5	23	18

(Franklin, 1997:40)

## **KNOWLEDGE/FEAR OF VICTIMIZATION AND BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION**

Berrill (1992) found that the many lesbians and gay men fear harassment and victimization in the future. Berrill found that 51% to 79% feared for their safety and that 76% to 88% expect that they will be the target of anti-gay harassment or violence in the future. A Toronto study found that 83% of respondents know at least one person who was verbally harassed or physically assaulted because of perceived sexual orientation, and 42% knew of more than three people who had experienced harassment or assault (Faulkner:1997:27)

Berrill (1992) notes that 45% of those surveyed in an 1984 NGLTF study reported that they modified their behaviour to reduce risk of attack. In the Toronto study, 78% of the respondents report that the possibility of anti-gay violence affected how they act or behave. Several methods were employed to modify behaviour including not being openly gay or lesbian, limiting public affection, modifying dress and behaviour (to appear "straight"), and street wariness which included fear of walking on certain streets or neighbourhoods (Faulkner:27-29)

## **VICTIM PROFILE**

Younger gay men and lesbians are more likely to be victimized. Joyce Hunter (1992:78) surveyed 500 gay and bisexual youths. The results were that 40% had experienced violent physical assaults; of those 46% reported that the assault was gay related. Comstock (1991:37) found that 68% of non-white homosexual were victimized compared to 50% of Caucasian homosexuals. Respondents of colour were beaten 21% of the incidents while Caucasian respondents were beaten in 17% of the incidents.

In addition, gay men and lesbians who are open about their homosexuality are more likely to be victimized than gay and lesbian who are less open. For instance, in one survey, 31%

of gay males who had agreed or strongly agreed that "it is important to me to be out to straight people I know" had experienced anti-gay violence compared to 21% of the other respondents (Harry, 1992:120). It has also been found that gays whose friends are also gay are more likely to be victimized (Comstock, 1991:53). Harry (as cited in Comstock, 1991:53) reported that lifestyle of lesbians and gay men played an instrumental role in the rate of anti-gay violence. For example, Harry found that those 39% of gay men who behaved in a "very feminine manner" were victimized; 22% of gay men who behaved masculine; and 17% of gay men behaved very masculine were victimized. Harry also found that those engaging in sex in public places occasionally or many times were more likely to be victimized.

### **GENDER DIFFERENCES IN VICTIMIZATION**

The most vulnerable group to assaults tends to be young gay males. Berrill (1992) reports that gay males experience greater levels of anti-gay verbal harassment (by non-family members), threats, victimization in school and by police, physical violence, and intimidation. Lesbians experience higher levels of verbal harassment by family members and encounter more discrimination than gay men at work.. Whereas, gay males face more physical violence, for example, in an average of three surveys Comstock (1991) found that 21% of the gay men were beaten compared to 8% of lesbians. Faulkner (1997) found that gay men reported higher rates of victimization and violence than did lesbians. She found that gay men experienced higher levels of violence and harassment in all categories except being spat upon, assault with a weapon, and sexual harassment.

Berrill (1992) states that there are at least five reasons why gay males are more likely to be victims than lesbians. First, statistics show that males are more likely to be victims of crime.

Second, gay males are perceived (possibly due to stereotypes) to be more visible than lesbians. This could also be attributed to the fact that there are more gay bars for males than there are for lesbians and that in general males are more likely to occupy the public sphere than women. Third, gay men tend to recognize their sexual orientation earlier than lesbians, therefore experiencing more opportunities to be victims. Fourth, lesbians may be more likely to modify their behaviour. Lesbians avoid certain locations and avoid physical contact with same sex partners. In the Toronto study, Faulkner (1997) found that more women (121 versus 93) than men reported ways in which they altered their behaviour in attempts to avoid anti-gay harassment.

Finally and most importantly, it is difficult to differentiate between an attack that may be anti-gay and anti-women. Without verbal indication a victim may not know whether the attack was anti-gay or anti-woman or both. Faulkner (1997:17) states that "Women are more likely to identify gender based harassment and violence and may have difficulty determining whether the motivation for an attack is woman-hating or hate based on sexual orientation." Faulkner (1997:27) also notes that "some women noted that the threat of anti-gay/lesbian harassment and violence is indistinguishable from the way that the possibility of sexist violence affects their behaviour." They feared walking on streets, men and gangs of men in cars, sexual assault and sexual harassment. These are fears that all women including lesbians face everyday.

## **SETTINGS OF VICTIMIZATION**

Comstock (1989:105) states "most violence occurs in public areas specifically lesbian/gay areas...and involve pursuing, preying upon and targeting victims rather than reactions to chance encounters." Comstock (1991:51) found that 59% of anti-gay incidents occurred in an



public lesbian/gay area; 31% public non lesbian/gay area.(26% home; and 25% at school). In the Toronto study, it was found that the most violent incidents take place in the known lesbian and gay areas of the city (Faulkner, 1997:xi). The majority of reports received by the 519 Lesbian and Gay Bashing Reporting Line, occurred in Church/Wellesley area (Toronto's "gay ghetto") (Faulkner, 1997:32). In a Vancouver study, most of the incidents occurred in the West End which is the city's gay area (Cernetig, 1996:A14). Gareth Kirkby editor of Xtra West, a gay and lesbian newspaper stated "living in the West End (Vancouver) is a double-edged sword...there may be safety in numbers. So you'd think it'd be safe here. But it also means the gay bashers know where to find a victim" (Cernetig, 1995:A14). Nevertheless, Faulkner (1997) found that lesbians and gay men were "targets for anti-gay/lesbian violence in ordinary circumstances of work and life." It was found that of the 233 incidents reported 127 occurred on the street; 34 occurred in school; 23 occurred at work; 19 occurred outside lesbian/gay establishment; 12 occurred at the subway/transit; 12 occurred at home; and 6 occurred in a park.

Faulkner (1997) also found that females more often experienced violence in their homes, workplaces, and schools. In addition, Berrill (1992) notes that males were more likely to be victimized in school or in public gay-identified areas. Conversely, Berrill (1992) found that lesbians are victimized in non-gay identified areas and in the home. Comstock (1991:112) states that "although both gay men and lesbians violate social norms and are penalized, only the latter appear to be punished physically by high-ranking household members."

Victimization in schools and colleges is alarming high. D'Augelli (1992) found that nearly all of his respondents (99%) had overheard derogatory anti-gay/lesbian remarks on campus. Two thirds (67%) had heard such comments often, one third (32%) sometimes. In

addition, D'Augelli found that 28% believed that harassment was very likely, 36% said fairly likely, 32% somewhat likely, and only 4% said they would not be harassed on campus.

## **REPORTING VICTIMIZATION**

In many situations the victim does not report the incident to police. Comstock (1991) found that 73% of lesbian and gay victims never reported the victimization compared to 64% of other crime victims. In those instances, the reasons given for not reporting were: 67% experienced or perceived the police as anti-gay; 40% said that they would not risk public disclosure of their sexual orientation; 14% feared that reporting would incur abuse from the police; 14% said they did not have witnesses; and 9% believed that it was not worth the trouble which is the reason given most by the general population (Comstock, 1989:104).

Faulkner (1997) found that of those who did not report to police had similar reasons which included: they did not think incident was serious enough to report; they did not think police would care or take the incident seriously; they feared being "outed" by the police report; they claimed that the police officers were the perpetrators of violence; they perceived that the police would not take any action; and they perceived police as homophobic.

Faulkner (1997) found that thirty respondents reported the incident to police. Nine reported that the police response was poor, nine reported the police response was average, five reported police response was fair, four rated the police response as good, three reported that the police response was excellent. In a more detailed account twenty-three reported that the police were indifferent, eleven indicated the police were hostile, and fifteen stated that the police were homophobic towards them.

## **PROFILE OF PERPETRATORS**

In Comstock's (1991:60) survey of lesbians and gay men, 46% of perpetrators were under 21 years of age and 70% were under 28 years old. Comstock found that 94% of the perpetrators were males. Women report a higher rate of victimization by female perpetrators than men do, (15% to 1%). Females attacked gay men only when accompanied by male perpetrators. Anti-gay perpetrators tend to attack in groups. Comstock (1991:63) found that 48% of the incidents involved multiple perpetrators. In a 1991 survey of 1,323 victims of anti-gay violence, it was found that 78% of incidents involved multiple perpetrators (Berrill, 1992:30).

Faulkner (1997) found that perpetrators are described as co-workers, neighbours, police, family members, students, doctors, strangers, and teenagers. However, the majority of incidents involved adult males or male youth. It was also found that females were more likely to be victimized by people they knew (co-workers, neighbours, relatives and acquaintances). When the attack occurred on the street, the perpetrators were more likely to be strangers usually young males in groups.

Berrill (1992) states that the majority of hate crimes against gay men and lesbians are not committed by organized hate groups. However, Berrill claims that offenders or potential offenders may be encouraged by the rhetoric of the Ku Klux Klan, Neo-Nazis and Skinheads. Nevertheless, the majority of incidents are perpetrated by "average people acting on society's intolerance and hatred of gay men and lesbians"(Faulkner,1997:23).

## **EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON PERPETRATORS**

There are very few studies on the perpetrators or potential perpetrators of anti-gay behaviour. However, recently some research has been conducted. Anthony D'Augelli and Melissa Rose (1990) surveyed 218 (heterosexual) college freshman. They found that 98% had heard disparaging remarks made against homosexuals. Of those 55% reported hearing these remarks often. In addition, 85% admitted to make disparaging comments and of those 19% reported making the comments often. Thirty percent of males conceded that they made negative comments often, while 7% of females stated that they made negative comments often. In addition, D'Augelli and Rose (1990) found that 8% of the respondents felt that harassment against lesbians and gay men was very likely, 39% felt that it was fairly likely; 44% felt it was somewhat likely; and 9% felt it was unlikely. D'Augelli and Rose also found that 78% of the respondents were not very interested in learning more about gays and lesbians whereas only 3% were interested in learning about gays and lesbians.

Sunita Patel, Thomas Long, and Susan McCammon (1995) surveyed 102 male college students who studied at a military academy. They found that 52% were in a group that had yelled negative comments at lesbians and gay men; 38% had talked negatively about gays and lesbians; 34% had verbally threatened someone who "had checked me out" ; 25% were rude to someone that they thought was gay; 8% hit or pushed someone that "brushed up against their body"; and 5% were involved in a fight with someone who had "made a move on them." Patel, Long, and McCammon (1995) also found that the respondents made a conscious attempt to avoid gays and lesbians. For example they found that 42% would move away from someone suspected as a homosexual; 37% would stare to convey disappointment; and 29% would change seats if they

encountered a gay man or lesbian sitting near them.

Franklin (1997) surveyed 484 community college students. She found that 10% admitted to committing anti-gay physical acts or threats and that 24% committed verbal assault. One hundred and seven respondents filled out a detailed description of an incident involving the harassment of a homosexual and Franklin (1997) found that the 28% of the incidents occurred at school; 17% in their neighbourhood; 12% gay defined area; and 43% other. In addition, 67% reported attacking a lone homosexual, whereas 15% attacked two and 18% attacked 3 or more. The perpetrators reported being alone in 28% of the incidents; with another person in 20% of the incidents, and in 57% of the incidents the perpetrator reported that he/she was with more than two people.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **RESEARCH METHOD AND DATA COLLECTION**

The research method was interviewing students at the University of Windsor who express negative attitudes towards homosexuals or homosexuality. The majority of the subjects were involved or witnessed various types of anti-gay behaviour. The initial research was conducted in a first year sociology class and a first year psychology class in which 569 students filled out a survey (see appendix A) that examined anti-gay attitudes. The first twenty questions were constructed by Herek (1988) and the next ten question were constructed by the researcher. The purpose of the survey was for the researcher to identify students with the most negative attitudes and contact them for an in-depth interview. A total of 569 (189 male and 380 female) students completed the survey. 2 At the end of the survey, students were asked to volunteer for an interview, 222 (66 male and 156 female) students volunteered for the interview. The researcher then identified the most negative of the students who volunteered.

The items were coded by the numbers: 4 (strongly agree) 3 (agree) 2 (disagree) 1 (strongly disagree). Reverse coding was used for questions 2, 4, 7, 10, 12, 20, and 24. The total scale scores could range from 30 (extremely positive) to 120 (extremely negative). The mid range score would be 75. (See Appendix B for complete results.) The average score was 63.18. Males were significantly more negative with an average score of 72.73 while the female score was 60.03. Those who volunteered to be interviewed were more positive in their attitudes than those who did not volunteer. For students who volunteered the score was 57.6 (68.34 male and

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2 69 surveys were not completed properly, the respondents left several questions unanswered.

53.04 female) compared to 66.9 (75.2 males and 62.35 females) for non-volunteers.

The researcher then chose the most homophobic students by examining the scores of the students. Thirty nine (25 males, 14 females) students were contacted for an interview through e-mail and telephone. Of those 3 (two males, one female) refused and 36 agreed. Of those 16 (13 males and 3 females) failed to attend the interview. Eventually 10 males and 10 females were interviewed over a two month (October and November, 1997) period. Their scores were significantly higher than the total sample, their average was 90.69 ( 93.8 for males and 87.57 for females). The interviews took place in a secure place that ensured privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity. The interviews were held in my office on campus (outside of the Sociology Department). The office area is generally secluded which ensured that individuals (e.g. professors, fellow students) who knew the nature of my research would not be able to speculate about the participants. The interviews lasted from 25 minutes to 1 hour and 15 minutes, the majority of which lasted approximately 45 minutes.

## **SAMPLE/SUBJECTS**

Of the 10 male subjects and 10 female subjects, the majority (13) of the students were first year university students. The other (7) were second and third year students. They came from diverse programs which included, Sociology, Criminology, History, Political Science, Psychology, and Business. Demographic information was not gathered, however, the majority of the subjects were in their late teens or early twenties.<sup>3</sup> There were two male subjects in their mid or late twenties. One female subject was in her fifties. Several of the subjects lived in residence

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<sup>3</sup> Information on age, faculty, year and residence was gathered during casual conversation with the subject before the interview began.

(8), some lived with their parents (3), and others lived alone or with a roommate (9).

## **DATA RECORDING**

An interview guide was employed (see appendix C). It ensured that the interviews stayed within the time frame and also that research objectives were maintained. With the subject's permission, all the interviews were tape recorded. Some of the subjects had reservations about the tape. Several of the subjects claimed that they had a distinct voice and did not want to be heard by others. However, I ensured that strict confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained. After, the interview was transcribed the tapes were erased.

## **TYPE OF DESIGN AND DATA ANALYSIS**

The research employed an interpretative design. In an interpretative approach the researcher's goal is to draw out the perspectives, feelings, and interpretations of the subjects studied. The researcher does this by getting to know an issue through the point of view of those involved (Neuman, 1997:68). The method employed was successive approximation which involves repeated iterations or cycling through the steps, moving toward a final analysis (Neuman, 1997:423). The data were organized into categories, that were revealed upon meticulous reading through the transcripts. The first step in the final data analysis was to place into one category all the material from the interviews that related to one theme or concept. The second step was to compare material within the categories to look for variations or nuances in meanings. The third step was to compare all categories to discover connections between themes. The fourth step was to integrate theories into the analysis to explain the findings. To explain anti-gay attitudes, Berger and Luckmann's social constructionism was employed along with the ideas of theorists who include Robert Connell, Adrienne Rich, Erving Goffman, Jeffrey Weeks,



Diane Fuss, and Chris Ingraham. To explain anti-gay behaviour, the criminological theories of Routine Activities, Sutherland's Differential- Association, Aker's Social Learning, Hoffman-Bustamente's Role theory, Miller's focal concerns, Adler's masculinity thesis, Sykes and Matza's Techniques of Neutralization, and Hirchi and Gottfredson's theory of criminality were employed.

## **DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS**

This study confined itself to interviewing male or female students enrolled at the University of Windsor. It neglects a large portion of the population that do not attend University. Nevertheless, it provides important insight into the attitudes and behaviours of future community leaders. As well, many of the subjects came from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Many subjects talked about their experience at work, school, and in the community. not isolated to a university environment.

## **ETHICAL ISSUES**

There were several ethical issues that were addressed in this research project. The issues that are most salient are privacy, anonymity and confidentiality. Privacy issues arise when the researcher "probes into beliefs, backgrounds and behaviours in a way that reveals intimate private details" (Neuman, 1997:452). The subject's privacy must be protected and thus anonymity must be provided. In this research I used code names and did not provide specific demographic information. All confidential information about the subject was coded to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. For example, first names were changed to M1 (male subject # 1) or F3 (Female subject # 3).

Confidentiality is also important. Confidentiality "means that information may have names attached to it, but the researcher holds it in confidence or keeps it secret from the public" (Neuman, 1997:453). The interviews were conducted in my office on campus, a private location outside of the sociology department. This spot was chosen because subjects would not want to be seen entering an area where they may have been identified by professors or other students who may speculate that they are participating in my research. In addition, names were not published or revealed to anyone. This was extremely important because some of the students had committed criminal acts (assault and criminal harassment) and others feared that their views could become public and they would be criticized or punished by "liberal" professors.

An important part of this research is informed consent. The consent (see appendix D) form told the subjects what they were asked to do, by whom, and for what purpose. It informed the participants of any risks. It informed the subjects of the rights they had in the interview process and the right to review the material and the right to withdraw from the process. The consent form ensured anonymity of the subjects.

Other issues introduced by the Ethics Committee (see appendix E) included deception, danger to the researcher, and possible legal harm to the subject. I subsequently addressed these issues in an appendix (See appendix F). The issue of deception was addressed by adding and clarifying statements to the informed consent and the interview guide. Before the interview began, I clearly asked the subject if he/she would be willing to talk about anti-gay behaviour that they either know about, witnessed or took part in.

The second concern was danger to the researcher, The Ethics Committee was concerned participants would recognize that they were contacted because of their negative attitudes and

they would become hostile and/or conclude that the researcher is gay. I believe that the benefits of the research outweigh the minimal risk associated with this type of research. The participants volunteered freely for this study; they were not coerced or put into a threatening position. Introducing the sexuality of the researcher, in my view, brings troubling considerations. Is it unacceptable for a gay or lesbian social scientist to conduct certain types of research?

Nevertheless, the ethics concern has some merit: some of the subjects may have animosity towards a gay man or lesbian asking questions about their negative attitudes. Before the interview, I stated clearly that I was not gay, and that anything they would say would not offend me. Although I certainly disagreed with many of the comments, I was not shocked or caught off-guard by their attitudes/beliefs and/or behaviour. In one interview danger to the researcher was present for a brief moment. An aggressive male subject was confused by the question, "How did you personally feel about those twins (gay teens)?" The subject interpreted the word "feel" to mean some type of sexual attraction towards the gay males. He vehemently answered back, "What do you mean, did I have feelings for them?" I gained the impression that he thought that I would imply that males with negative attitudes towards gays, are reacting against their own latent homosexuality which is a theory used by some psychologists to explain homophobia. I quickly diffused his anger and confusion by stating, "No, not that way (sexually). I mean, What did you think of them? Nevertheless, in the majority of the interviews (including the one with the aggressive male) I gained trust and was able to develop rapport with the subjects. They perceived me as a person who was willing to hear their "side of the story" and I do not believe that danger to myself was an issue.

The final concern was legal harm to the subject. The subject was asked to divulge information that could lead to criminal charges. In social research the researcher is subject to subpoena and could be forced to reveal details in court. I addressed this issue, by clearly stating that it was my ethical responsibility to uphold the pledge (in the informed consent) to maintain strict and total confidentiality. Despite the nature of the subject's attitudes and/or behaviours, I guaranteed privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

The subjects in this study have a plethora of attitudes towards homosexuality and homosexuals. Three major themes emerged within the data and subsequently the analysis revolves around these three themes. This chapter reveals negative attitudes held by the subjects. The fifth chapter explains the influences that affect attitudes and the sixth chapter investigates anti-gay behaviour.

### **HOMOPHOBIC ATTITUDES**

In this study categories were constructed to exhibit the major tenets of homophobic attitudes. The homophobes in this study hold a multitude of attitudes and feelings about gay men and lesbians. Several of the subjects fit into a combination of these categories and are not exclusive to any particular category. Five major attitudes emerged: Repulsion, Fear, Moral/Religious Righteousness, Abnormality, and Conditional Acceptance.

#### **Repulsion**

Many of the subjects viewed homosexuals with aversion claiming that homosexuals are disgusting and that homosexuals are "gross". Statements directed at gay males included :

I just think that ah, they're a blemish in society. It's disgusting. It is not right.(M5)

I find it kind of repulsive, that is just....like I don't like to say that. (F3)

However, there was a difference in how males viewed lesbians. Some of the males were excited by lesbianism or found lesbians to be erotic. They were not disgusted by the thought of lesbians having sex.

**It is a heterosexual thing, from where I am from, girls [lesbians] attract guys. (M17)**

**Plus, I mean two girls, you know man [turn-on]. (M12)**

**However, these ideas or images of lesbians are developed in relation to a pornographic version of lesbianism. Lesbians are only accepted if they portray the image of a fantasy woman whose sole purpose is to entice and titillate male heterosexuals. A primary condition is that the lesbian be attractive, feminine, sexually permissive, and sexually interested in men.**

**[Lesbians are okay in] Porno's, strip clubs, nothing wrong with that...There is two good looking women, not real lesbians, like if there is a chance [to have sex]. (M20).**

**Well the act doesn't gross me out ...Because I don't know, I have seen it, and well I like to watch, it is like erotic. But they are really hot women, not your typical dyke, you know masculine lesbian. (M19)**

**In addition, many of the male subjects who viewed lesbians as erotic acknowledged that the lesbians that turned them on were not "real" lesbians.**

**But I know that they [lesbians depicted in pornography] are not real lesbians. (M19)**

**I know that women in pornos are not real lesbians; they are not real lesbians. (M14)**

**Consequently, the male subjects viewed "real" lesbians with as much disgust as male homosexuals. This was especially true of lesbians that were seen in the public sphere.**

**I saw for the first time two lesbians on campus, I was turned off. They were really disgusting. It is not so much the appearance, it is knowing what their behaviour is. I just think that it is unnatural.(M1)**

**A few weeks ago, I seen two girls kissing in a bar, on the dance floor actually, in front of everyone...that was totally disgusting. I think that it should be, you know, be against the law to do that in public. (M11)**

**It can be concluded that male subjects are repulsed by a "real lesbian existence." If lesbians are not sexually available to males or if they do not fit into a pornographic image then the subjects**

were repulsed by them.

Female respondents also denied a lesbian existence, by claiming that lesbians were just trying to attract men. One female subject described a bisexual girl that she encountered:

She goes there (bar) dressed like a complete whore, literally, like a complete whore...If you want to dress that way, but then it is just this attitude, like, I mean, she will dance with her other friend who is dressed like a whore and they take over the dance floor, and they walk around with this whole aura. Like we are so much better than you and everything else and then they do this like dancing stuff with each other. And they stare at every guy in the room when they do it. (F3)

The majority of the female subjects claimed that there was no difference in their feeling about gay men as opposed to lesbians. However, female subjects were aware of the discrepancy in male attitudes towards lesbians. Several of them exhibited frustration at heterosexual male attraction towards lesbians. They were especially upset with lesbians or bisexual girls that were in bars. The feeling was that they were using lesbian sexuality to lure males. Some of the female respondents claimed to be more repulsed by lesbianism because of men's attitudes towards them.

Yes, more repulsed by women...just because I am a girl and I don't like that. I mean, I know like, it seems like lesbians are more accepted...just because guys like two girls and stuff like that. (F10)

I think that society, especially men are more accepting of lesbianism. I think that everyone has seen two women kissing and stuff. It is definitely more acceptable than two men kissing. Which is not right. (F13)

Female subjects were affected in that they resented the male attraction with lesbians or bisexuals and they believed that female homosexuality was a "fad". One female subject (F3) stated that lesbians in bars were trying to be "flashy" and that she thought they were "just for show." Several of the female subjects were antagonized by lesbians or bisexuals. Female subjects

resented that female homosexuals were not as despised as gay males

Like two girls are at a bar and they are dancing together, guys are all like wow. I never have understood that. Because it is not like girls look at two girls and say that is cool. (F3)

Females were affected by this image of the lesbian or bisexual as a seductress who entices males. Media outlets (which include music videos, movies, Internet, and pornography) further reinforces this stereotype of the lesbian as a seductress by displaying pornographic images of lesbians and lesbian lifestyles which consequently renders lesbian identity invisible.

With the gender difference in attitudes towards lesbians it is important to analyze lesbophobia. It can be argued that social reaction to lesbianism is different from the reaction to gay men. By defying patriarchal sex-role stereotypes, lesbianism goes a step further than male homosexuality: lesbians threaten everything which dictates that men are dominant and women are submissive, that men are superior to women. Adrienne Rich's (1993) important work, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" examines heterosexuality as a political institution which disempowers women. Rich's intention is to deconstruct feminist theory. Rich posits that feminist theory locates heterosexuality as "normal" and lesbianism as "deviant". Rich asserts that it goes beyond sexual inequality and further enforces heterosexuality upon women. Steven Seidman (1994:265) claims that "Compulsive heterosexuality is enforced by a system of laws, economics, public policy, a cultural of heterosexual romance, pornography, female sexual slavery, and the recourse to violence against women who deviate. Central to this is the deployment of a vast cultural apparatus, including the mass media and science, aimed at rendering lesbianism invisible and deviant." Lesbian existence is suppressed by compulsory heterosexuality which denies sexual equality and promotes lesbophobia.



It can be argued that males are socialized through the media to treat lesbians as sex objects that exist to amuse and arouse men. Consequently, heterosexual females may view lesbians as seductresses whose sole purpose is to corrupt and steal men away from them. This renders lesbians invisible and deviant because they are viewed exploitatively and are not truthfully presented. Nevertheless, “real lesbians” and gay men are viewed with some form of repulsion or disgust by both male and female subjects.

### **Fear/Discomfort**

The previous category examined the subject’s repulsion with homosexuality. This is the result of fear. Fear involves the notion that a homosexual member of the same sex will be sexually interested and “hit on them”. In addition, the subjects also claimed to be uncomfortable around gay men and lesbians.

Both males and female subjects claim that they would feel or had felt uncomfortable around gays and lesbians.

I have a problem with the practice. I don’t have a problem with them. I would feel uncomfortable with them [gay men]. But I would try to you know, treat them like a real person. (M1)

I don’t think that they are going to rape me or anything. I wouldn’t be worried or anything. Uncomfortable yeah. A little awkward. (M2)

I guess it makes me feel like, I don’t know. I just don’t feel comfortable. I don’t want to be put into a situation where I don’t feel comfortable. Like if it came down to it and I was forced to interact, you know to work, or through, something like that, then I would, like, you know, you have to do, what you have to do. But if it was my choice, then no I wouldn’t. I just don’t want to be put in a situation like that. (F3)

I would feel uncomfortable...that’s not my lifestyle and I don’t think it is right. (F8)

The subjects were predominately afraid of same sex contact. There was a fear that homosexuals would be sexually interested in them.

I would have a conversation with him. But as far as carrying on a friendship or whatever, I am still uncomfortable with that...I would feel very compromised. I don't know, like to put it in a blunt, to put it in real good terms....It is the fear that a guy would try to pick you up and I don't know, that fear lingers all the time. I mean if a girl tries to pick you up, what the hell, who cares? (M12)

I don't like em, and in my mind, I don't know what they are thinking. They might be sitting on the couch eyeing me up and if I knew that they were doing that...Christ I wouldn't like it. (M15)

I have several female gays or lesbians hit on me, I would feel less comfortable around them. Would I choose to have them as friends? Probably not. (F18)

Not all the subjects feared that they would be "hit on". Several stated that they would not feel threatened by gay men and lesbians. But they still felt that they would be uncomfortable around gays and lesbians. It was concluded by these subjects that they would feel uncomfortable because homosexuals were different and that they would have nothing in common with gay men or lesbians.

I think that I would feel uncomfortable around gay men, because like I said they are very out-going and I am not very out-going and I think that I would be uncomfortable. (F13)

I just don't think to talk to somebody that's gay. I mean you're not going to go out to a gay bar. What the hell you going to do? I guess you could be friends, but I just don't see it. (M20)

[Around lesbians] Okay don't even look at me. That is why I would be, like not frightened, you know, I hate to use the word frightened. Because I don't think that they would actually attack me or anything. It is just more uncomfortable. And I think that is the way they go about it, it is more like, in your face kind of thing. (F3)

I doubt that I would have anything in common with a bunch of lesbians. (M19)

I think that they have a whole different attitude. I think that they have a whole different method, where they go for fun, what they like to do...I think there is a lot of difference other than just the sexual. (F3)

The fear and discomfort was something that many of the subjects did not understand but they accepted as rational, normal behaviour in which a heterosexual must engage.

### **Religious/Moral Righteousness**

The third category is religious and moral righteousness. This is when the subject views homosexuality as religiously wrong or that society is corrupted by homosexuals. In this category there is a belief that the subject's attitude is an important moral component of society.

In this study, several subjects identified themselves as religious. They believed that negative attitudes towards homosexuals were an obligatory part of religious doctrine. Three subjects brought Bibles and scriptures to back up their beliefs.

Well, I was reading my Bible last night. In case you ask me to defend my reasoning. You should have an opinion, but you should be able to back it up. It is not just, I feel this way just because, most of the reason is that people shouldn't do that. God stated that you shouldn't do that therefore you shouldn't do it. (F7)

In addition, among religious subjects there was the belief that if homosexuals were religious or found "God's path", they would not be gay and they would become heterosexuals.

I don't agree with their lifestyle. Yes, I don't agree with it period. I don't disrespect them, or you know, put them down. I don't do that. I mean, If he wants to talk, that's fine. If he wants to go out and do something, fine. I do not agree with the way that he chose to live his life. Basically the reason is that he is an atheist. I am not. (F7)

I think that people who are gay, are just basically confused and have been sucked into it, you know what I mean sucked into it,... if they had the strong religious background, then they wouldn't be gay by now. (M11)

In addition, many of the religious subjects felt that homosexuality was learned

behaviour, they felt that homosexuals were not born gay. The non-religious subjects believed that homosexuality was in-born. However one female subject noted that homosexuality could be thought of as part of the original sin and that homosexuals must overcome it in order to be accepted into God's kingdom.

I think that if it is biological then it is just, well it says in the Bible that we are all born with the original sin, so that if it is proven to be biological than that is just part of the original sin. (F16)

Theologically, James B. Nelson (as cited in Lavery-Medd, 1991) points out that there have been four stances concerning homosexuality in Christianity. The first is the rejecting punitive attitude which unconditionally rejects homosexuality and encourages a punitive attitude towards gay persons. This punitive attitude means exclusion from the Church and its sacraments. For many centuries, acts of stoning, burning, and mutilation were considered to be appropriate ways of dealing with homosexuals. None of the subjects in this study subscribed to this stance.

The second is the rejecting-non-punitive position which is the belief that homosexuality is considered a physical, psychological, and social sickness. This view is the belief that homosexuality is unnatural and must be denounced. However, God's overwhelming grace prevents societal condemnation and punishment. The belief is that one must not accept homosexuality, but work to help "convert" homosexuals. Some supporters of this view argue that the church has been hypocritical in their actions. Supporter's claim that as a good Christian you should love the sinner, but hate the sin. In this perspective, homosexuality is equated with alcoholism and is considered a illness to be cured. The majority of the religious subjects subscribed to this view.

The third view is qualified acceptance. This is the belief that homosexuality is a perversion. It is recognized that even intense psychotherapy and treatment cannot change one's sexual orientation. This position advocates that behaviour patterns be modified, which can either mean that the homosexual change his/her sexual orientation or practice abstinence. If they can do neither, than they are encouraged to be involved in a committed, responsible relationship.

However the homosexual must not forget that it is a sinful act and a perversion.

One subject believed in this stance. She recounted a story about a gay man she met who claimed he had found God and became heterosexual. She was very impressed with this man and it left a deep impression on her attitudes towards homosexuality.

I was actually amazed. I actually heard stories about people you know, feeling gay, engaging in a gay lifestyle and coming to know the religious aspect of it and realizing what they were doing was wrong and changing, but I never actually talked to somebody like that. And I thought was pretty amazing. (F16)

The fourth stance is full acceptance. This is the belief that homosexuality is neither a sin, nor a perversion but a sexual orientation that is natural. Some Christian denominations practice this stance and have an open attitude towards homosexuality. Two subjects claimed that their religious backgrounds (Buddhist and Anglican) were pro-gay.

In addition subjects (both non-religious and religious) employed moral reasoning as a justification for their negative attitudes. Several adopted the idea that children might be harmed by a gay presence in public.

I don't agree with the public affection. I wouldn't want to see a guy and girl, out in public doing that. There's kids running around and I don't agree with them showing that kind of explicit affection, in front of people where they can see that. I mean get a room. Nobody wants to see that. (F7)

Other subjects believed that gays have too many rights and that society does not have proper values.

I mean they have more rights, a man can marry a man. A woman can marry a woman. And they can adopt a child. I mean this shit is garbage like I mean, I am a straight male that likes to drink and party on Friday night, yet I don't get a Parade on Yonge Street, like these guys just because they are fags or lesbians...I think that it is horrible. They strut around, I mean ah, any other time, ugh, if you walk around the street naked you would be busted for indecent exposure, and in these parades they are exposing themselves and they are showing ugh, different types of ah, different types of ah, bondage issues, you know they are walking down the street with leashes and dog collars, and shit and I think that it is disgusting, that kids have to see this stuff. And even myself, it makes me sick. (M5)

In essence, the subjects believe that they are defending the mores of society. They considered themselves brave voices of reason and decency. They wanted to buck political correctness and stand up for what is right and denounce what is wrong.

I think that today's society is just accepting of too much...Obviously I can't push my religious beliefs on everyone. Yeah, I think that this society is too accepting of homosexuality, violence on TV, everything...We live in a selfish society, and people, it is like every man for himself and people want what ever they want and they will do what ever they, what ever they want to get it. Um, like we are just too accepting of too much. (F16)

Religious/moral righteousness gives the subject a sense of protection against negative reaction to their beliefs. They felt that their reasoning for opposing gays is a valid and a useful component of a moral and just society.

### **Abnormality**

The previous three categories of repulsion, fear/discomfort and righteousness are all justified by the idea of abnormality. Abnormality is when the subject views homosexuality as not being natural or normal behaviour. Although there are differing degrees among the subjects, every subject mentioned that homosexuality was unnatural behaviour.

**I just think it is not natural. It's disgusting...I think that they are abnormal. (M2)**

**I myself, think, that it is sick. But, just because I don't think it is right, it is just sick to me, and also reflects my religion too. (F10)**

**I don't think that they're disgusting and that they are perverted but it is a perversion of nature. (F16)**

**Some subjects proclaimed that homosexuality is sick and that it denies a true sexuality.**

**Probably because they're not normal. They don't like women. They are not manly. I would perceive them of not being manly because they're not. They don't like women. (F4)**

**Other subjects used reproduction to justify their argument of abnormality.**

**Because it is a man and a woman and I don't see that reproducing thing. I think that it is a man and woman and I don't think that [gay marriage] is right. (F8)**

**Well I think that looking at nature, obviously men marrying men they can't reproduce and women marrying women, they can't reproduce. Um, so I think that from a nature perspective I could also determine that. (F16)**

**This idea of normalcy is important to examine. Throughout the interviews the subjects compared gays and lesbians to other deviant groups or lifestyles such as child molesters, alcoholics, drug addicts, and murderers. Many of the subjects compared homosexuality to bestiality and to sex between animals.**

**Because I think that it is unnatural. I think that it is a perversion. It is a strong word to say. I am not sure what the cause is for homosexuality but I don't think, it is, I mean, like I hate to say it but you know, it is like animal sex, like I don't know the word, <Bestiality> Yeah. I mean in society it is accepted that you overcome any feelings of bestiality, and I think that it is the same for homosexuality.(M1)**

**When you walk down the street you don't see two male cats fucking! (M5)**

**I mean animals are smarter than humans, they know that, they don't go around um, they cannot reproduce when there is two animals together, two dogs together. There is no reproduction taking place, they are smarter than humans. (F7)**

The subjects find it easier to dislike homosexuals when they organize their views into good (heterosexual) and bad (homosexual). This is a functional way for the subject to construct an image of themselves. The idea of naturalness and abnormality is an important component of the subject's component of self. The subjects conceptualized themselves as heterosexual (normal) and anyone who was not heterosexual are deemed abnormal or deviant. Mary McIntosh's (1968) "The Homosexual Role," applies labeling theory to homosexuality. The idea of homosexuality is not inherently deviant but is labeled as such because it threatens dominant social customs and roles. Steven Epstein (1996:149) claims that McIntosh argues "a special, stigmatized category of individuals is created so as to keep the rest of society pure." Ki Nameste (1996:203) states that McIntosh "views homosexuality as a social role...the name homosexual demarcates acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and segregates individuals into 'deviant' and 'normal' categories." However, queer theory seeks to forsake labeling theory and/or deviance perspectives because they reinforce the homosexual/heterosexual boundary. Seidman (1997:93) argues that "queer theory wishes to challenge the regime of sexuality itself, that is, the knowledges and social practices that construct the self as sexual and that assume heterosexual and homosexuality as categories marking the truth of selves." Queer theorists argue that the creation of an hetero/homosexuality binary, leads to the exclusion and domination of homosexuals who are considered to be the opposite end of a hierarchical social system defined by homosexuality and heterosexuality (Seidman,1997:149). Seidman (1997:149) argues that Queer theorists claim that "the declaration of heterosexual selfhood elicits its opposite, indeed needs the homosexual in order to be coherent and bounded." In other words heterosexuals "need" homosexuality in order to construct themselves as superior. Jeffrey Weeks (1992:89) claims that "appeals to nature, to the claims of



natural, are amongst the most potent we can make. They place us in a world of apparent fixity and truth. They appear to tell us what and who we are, and where we are going. They seem to tell us the 'truth'." It is this conceptual framework of naturalness that is the most prevalent argument used by subjects. It is also perceived to be the strongest and most compelling argument against homosexuality.

### **Conditional Acceptance**

The final category is conditional acceptance. This is when the subject accepts or tolerates homosexuality with conditions. The three conditions are "Don't tell me"; "Keep it in the closet" and "What can I do?"

"Don't tell me" is the idea that the subject will be friends with gay men and lesbians but only if the gay male or lesbian does not talk about relationships or lifestyle. It is friendship with a condition.

Well I have no problem with it, I just don't want to hear about it. (F6)

No, like shun them like a leper. No, I wouldn't think I would do that. Just as long as they don't expect me to listen to their night life stories, what they have gone out and done. (F7)

I think if they keep it to themselves then that is okay...because I don't like it. I don't want to be around it. I don't want to be involved in it, but sure I will be good friends with you. (F8)

It's not like I am strongly, like just because I disagree with it. I am not going to discriminate, like I am not going to, you know, what I mean, not going to be your friend, like I work with these people, I talk to them all the time. But my point is that as long as they don't instill their beliefs and opinions on me, that's fine. (M12)

The second category is "keep it in the closet." This is when the subject believes that homosexuals should deny their existence. The difference between "don't tell me" and "keep it in

the closet” is that “don’t tell me” is a specific category for subjects that had formed acquaintances or friendships with gays or lesbians, whereas “keep it in the closet” is a more general idea that is a pervasive attitude among the subjects. In the survey, it was found that only 1 male and 3 females subjects disagreed with the item: “Gays and Lesbians should just stay in the closet.”. Overall, 33.3% of males and 8.4% of females students who were surveyed agreed with the statement. This exhibits that a large portion of males do not believe that gays or lesbians should occupy the public sphere.

In essence, “keep it in the closet” is the belief that homosexuality should be hidden and that by denying their existence gays would be able to get along much better in a “straight world”.

Well, I just think that it is unacceptable in this society. It shouldn't be allowed and if they want to do it, then keep it to themselves, just not on this planet <laughs>. (M15)

If they weren't too open, or too outgoing, about it, then it [homosexuality] would be okay. (M17)

They should stay in the closet. Sometimes I think that is right because I think that too much is made of sexual persuasion, like I said there are so many issues in the world that are far more important. (F18)

I think that they should try to be more, you know, in the closet, you know not publish... Well frankly I am getting sick of seeing it on TV and hearing about it. It is not really that big deal. As some of them make it out to be. Nobody cares whether or not they are gay, they should just, keep it in their own closet. (M2)

These two notions are very similar to the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy that was implemented within the United States Army. Barry Adam (1994:114) contends that “the U.S. state has adopted the homophobic doctrine propounded by the Vatican in demanding that the sexual and emotional lives of homosexual people be confined to the interior of their minds.” Adam (1994:107) further argues that “like other inferiorized peoples, gay people discover

themselves as symbols manipulated in the transmission of the dominant culture.”

The third category of conditional acceptance, is “What can I do?” This is the idea or notion that the subject must accept homosexuals because of political correctness. The feeling is that society is accepting, so the subject must learn to tolerate homosexuals in order to function. However, they believe that they do not necessarily have to open their arms to the gay community, just pretend to tolerate.

I have learned not really to accept it but learned to live with what I have been handed. You can't do anything about it, so you learn to live with it. It is kind of like politics. (M5)

I do but, I do agree with that [that society has become more accepting] but I don't agree with it. There is a lot of things in life I don't agree with, so. Sometimes you just have to fucking go with it. (M15)

In essence the subjects who claimed to accept , were not really accepting. They accepted the fact that homosexuals existed, but they did not accept their sexuality or lifestyle.

In conclusion, five major attitudes emerged in the data analysis. These attitudes included Repulsion, Fear/Discomfort, Moral/Religious Righteousness, Abnormality and Conditional Acceptance. Repulsion is the idea of disgust or aversion towards homosexuality or homosexuals. Moral/Religious righteousness is when the subject views homosexuality as religious or morally wrong. Fear/Discomfort is when the subject believes that homosexuals will be sexually interested and produce discomfort. Abnormality is the belief that homosexuality is not natural or normal behaviour. Conditional Acceptance is when the subject tolerates homosexuals or homosexuality with conditions.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **ATTITUDINAL INFLUENCES**

The categories of attitudes are not in-born or inherent. Attitudes are shaped and developed through human interaction in social situations. Homophobic attitudes are socially constructed through language, stereotypes, contact with gay men and lesbians, parents, peers, and societal forces that include media, religion, heterosexual hegemony, education, political correctness, and cultural/geographical background.

#### **LANGUAGE**

Language allows individuals to objectify a great variety of experiences and is the most important element in the objectivation of everyday life. Language also typifies experiences which allows individuals to include them under expansive categories in terms that have meanings both internally and externally. The most important vehicle in reality-maintenance is language. The fundamental reality-maintaining fact is the continuing use of the same language to objectify unfolding biographical experience (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Language is a important component in homophobic socialization. Similar to sexism and racism, homophobia is maintained through language that perpetuates stereotypes, misconceptions and myths about homosexuality.

Lesbians and gay men are frequently exposed to epithets, and innuendoes that remind them that homosexuals are viewed as abnormal, repulsive and unacceptable in the dominant heterosexual society. In this study, ten out of ten males and nine out of ten females admitted to using anti-gay epithets such as “fag”, “queer”, “dyke”, “homo”, and “lez”. Others admitted that the use of the word “gay” was synonymous with the word “stupid.”

Most of the subjects claimed that they would not use this language in the presence of gays and lesbians. However, seven male subjects admitted to verbally harassing gays or lesbians. There were two types of incidents: the first involved groups of males hurling insults at gay couples while driving in a car. The second involved the teasing, making fun of, or deriding homosexuals or suspected homosexuals in their presence. Nevertheless, the majority of the anti-gay language was performed in the presence of heterosexuals (or perceived heterosexuals). They used it in the family environment, peer groups, workplace settings, and at school.

They claim to use the language for a variety of reasons that include: it was for a joke/fun; to “get a rise” out of friends; to insult someone; and they claimed it was just a word that was part of everyday speech. Anti-gay language appeared to be reinforced through frequency of use, the peer group, and generally viewed as harmless when used within a group of “mature” heterosexuals. However, a gay or lesbian does not have to experience anti-gay epithets directly in order for the repercussions to be felt. Many lesbians and gay men witness this anti-gay behaviour and it can be a source of pain, frustration, and exclusion. Anti-gay language is also harmful, in that it shows that it is socially acceptable to exhibit bias, joke, insult, and ostracize lesbians and gay men. Anti-gay language contributes to heterosexism and reinforces homophobic attitudes.

## **STEREOTYPES**

Stereotypes are important components of reality maintenance. A stereotype is a set of expectations for an individual based on that individual’s membership in some category. (e.g. heterosexual or homosexual, male or female) The concept of reification is useful to the analysis of stereotypes. Reification is “the apprehension of the products of human activity as if they were something else than human products, such as facts of nature, results of cosmic laws, or

manifestations of divine will. Reification implies that man is capable of forgetting his [sic] own authorship of the human world" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:89). Homosexuals are a popular target of negative stereotypes and the reification process makes these stereotypes appear to be "real". They are considered observable facts, that "everybody knows."

Connell (1995:40) argues that in homophobic ideology, gay men are considered feminine whereas lesbians are deemed masculine. Thus, the boundary of homosexuality and heterosexuality is clouded by the boundary between masculine and feminine. Connell (1995:78) asserts "from the point of view of hegemonic masculinity, gayness is easily assimilated to femininity." In this study, male subjects view gay men as effeminate. They believe that gay men are interested in stereotypical feminine pursuits and interests.

They are more effeminate. Their interests would be more like art or drama...the artsy-fartsy type of thing. It is more what you hear, also more the things that females tend to be interested in... I wouldn't see them in construction or anything. (M1)

Gay men seem to be very feminine. Just from my experience, I don't, they tend to be again, very feminine. Even in a conversation, not all of them, but most of them, you can't even get into a conversation with them without feeling very uncomfortable...But then again, some people are not that. I would say most, like 95% are very feminine, the way they dress, the way that they conduct themselves, it's <laughs>. (M12)

A couple of them I knew were kind of funny...well you know, wacky queers and stuff. They were the type of people that seemed to hang around with the girls all the time. Choir boys. (M5)

Female subjects also viewed gay males as effeminate. However, females viewed femininity as a somewhat positive trait. They believed that gay men were easier to relate to than straight men.

**A gay man is more fruity. More feminine. And actually I bet you that they are more sensitive and feeling and a straight man is not sensitive, not fruity, more masculine. (F4)**

**Gay males are much more friendlier. They are easier to talk to. I find that. Um, they are more like a girlfriend, than a guy. (F6)**

**The men I know who are homosexual, um are more tuned into their feminine side so to speak, that they're more apt to speak about things that women enjoy talking about. (F18)**

**In addition, both male and female subjects equated lesbianism with masculinity.**

**Um, it is really weird because you see, when I think about it, I think of gay men, feminine, and I think of lesbians as masculine...I really have no idea why. Maybe I am, just think that there has to be a masculine and a feminine side, so like, a girl is a lesbian she has to be masculine, like that has to take over her weak feminine side or whatever. (F10)**

**More male, you know, the butch, they have the short hair. (M17)**

**However, the subjects had a more difficult time defining a lesbian identity. The majority of the subjects developed stereotypes through the media or casual encounters with gays and lesbians.**

**Gay men are negatively portrayed within the media and the subjects quickly described stereotypes of gay men. It can be argued that lesbians have historically been ignored in the mainstream media and the subjects did not have a point of reference to which to return.**

**I don't know if they would have more masculine, I wouldn't know. Um I think, well there is certainly something different. There is something odd about them. They dress differently. I don't know much about them. (M1)**

**I don't see the difference as much. It is hard for me to say. I know it is probably the haircut or whatever. (F9)**

**It is harder to see a lesbian woman, like you can't distinguish between a het, like normal straight and a lesbians because they don't really. There are certain lesbians who are masculine, but some aren't. They are like drop dead gorgeous. (M12)**

In essence, lesbians were viewed by these females as sexually aggressive bisexuals who were attempting to attract males.

I think a lot of them are just for show. A lot of them are just trying to be flashy [for males]. (F3)

Very flirtatious, very, talks about sex a lot. Um, very loud. They say whatever they are feeling. (F6).

I just think they are trying to be different. Or they are trying to get attention [From men](F10).

In addition, many of the female subjects described incidents where girls were dancing provocatively with other girls in bars. Several of the females viewed an increased lesbian presence in bars as a “fad” that girls performed to entice males.

A lot of the females, that I have found, and even from what I have heard, they do it a lot, not necessarily due to preference. Due to like, because it is like becoming this fad almost.(F3)

Some of the males viewed “real lesbians” as aggressive, dominating, man-hating feminists that worked traditional male jobs.

Pretty obvious, lesbian, short hair, shaved head, mannish features, dress up like men...They take male jobs, police officer or an authority figure. (M20)

I think that they are man-haters. I mean they are all feminists. They are trying to be men. (M14)

There are lesbians that scare the hell out of me, their like so masculine, right. They try to dominate you. Like they feel that every guy is so threatening or whatever like you know, they’re masculine, they are very aggressive.(M12)

Masculinity and femininity is judged to be a very important component in gay relationships. Subjects believed that gay and lesbian couples would have masculine and feminine traits. The notion was that one partner would “play” the masculine role while the other partner



would “play” the feminine role.

Usually in gay and lesbian relationships you have one that is butch, who dresses and acts more masculine, and one that is normal. Normal feminine, like a normal woman. Like they play the role of a man and woman. But they are two women. (F4)

Lesbians these days, there is the Big Bull Dyke, and then there is the sweet little innocent one, that does what the other bull dyke demands. (M5)

I think with a gay man, they would be more open, like dress differently, and at times they might be more feminine, like my aunt has two gay male friends who are a couple. One's really masculine and one's really feminine. (F10)

In general, both lesbians and gay men were subject to other stereotypes that included that they were “freaks” who like to show off and that they held very few morals.

They show all these freaky people who dress up like guys or girls or whatever, it doesn't really make me respect them any more. Just make me look like they are showing off. Something that they shouldn't really be showing off really. (M2)

I think that they probably have few values. Do you know what I mean, I don't think that they can judge basically wrong from right. That's what I think. (M11).

Not every subject subscribed to stereotypes. A few of the subjects admitted that stereotypes were not necessarily true because they had little experience with gays and lesbians.

I just think that is all myth, I will totally admit that. Because I don't have anything to relate it back to. (F3)

People make comments that gay men are feminine, and I don't necessarily buy into that stereotype. No, I don't have any preconceptions about what a gay man is... Yeah I am sure that there are gay men that are very feminine but there are also heterosexual men that are feminine. (F16)

Nevertheless, stereotypes have a profound effect on how the subjects view gays and lesbians. A subject who believed that stereotypes were “myths” acknowledged that stereotypes are powerful. She described how she was influenced by stereotypes.

**I don't know if you put them in your mind yourself and you just see them, like you wouldn't notice it unless you knew sort of thing. And once you notice it, it is more, you kind of exaggerate things more in your mind. (F3)**

**This can be related to the concept of selective perception which means that the subject only attends to information that supports their stereotypes and ignores information that contradicts them. A gay or lesbian identity may be reified, and there is a total identification of the gay man or lesbian with his/her socially assigned typification. "He [sic] is apprehended as nothing but that type"(Berger and Luckmann, 1966:91). The subject places all gay men and lesbians into one category and subsequently overlook any qualities that do not meet the typification.**

### **CONTACT WITH GAYS AND LESBIANS**

**Human contact is an important variable in social constructionism. This involves "face to face situations" which presents a "plentitude of symptoms of subjectivity." Face to face situations are highly flexible and an individual's response in any particular situation is a function of how he/she defines that situation rather than how the situation is objectively presented. Interaction is affected by the social stock of knowledge. The social stock of knowledge includes knowledge of the situation and its limits. The social stock of knowledge is dominated by the "pragmatic motive" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). For example, subjects knew the limitations of their contact with lesbians and gay men. The subjects did not report any same-sex friendships with gays or lesbians and it can be argued that close contact would "embarrass" or "stigmatize" the subject. The subjects made a conscious choice to either limit or avoid contact with lesbians and gay men. Hence, subjects knew and understood the consequences of being perceived as gay and avoided any ridicule, embarrassment, discomfort, and stigma associated with contact with lesbians and gay men.**

Typificatory schemes are important in face to face situations. Typifications ongoingly affect interaction and remain constant unless challenged by other typifications. In face to face situations misinterpretation and hypocrisy are more difficult to sustain. Thus, typifications are able to adapt when new and increasing information is processed (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:30-34). Nevertheless, John Kituse (1962) found that attitudes towards alleged deviant behaviour are progressively interpreted as inappropriate or peculiar in the course of interaction. For example, when the subjects have contact with gays or lesbians, they become less likely to view homosexuals positively. They view them more negatively. However, contact (face to face interaction) may allow the individual to view each other as unique and therefore atypical and a friendship may be formed. However, contact with homosexuals involves stereotypes and typifications. Thus even if typifications are challenged they have little impact on the subject. Even subjects who reported gay friends (female subjects with gay male friends) were involved in the process of stereotyping. The typificatory schemes grew stronger rather than weaker. Instead of viewing their friend as just a friend, the friend was viewed as gay and the subject expressed stereotypes about that individual. Also, those with limited contact would view gays or lesbians that didn't fit into typificatory schemes as exceptions to the scheme. One subject (F16) was surprised and shocked that an openly gay teen took an active role in the church functions at her high school. Her perception was that gays would not be interested in religion because they are inherently immoral in their actions.

He [gay teen] was very involved in the religious aspect of school, like, helping the priest with various things...like I said biblically it's wrong. So I just found it interesting.(F16)

In this study contact reinforced stereotypes and affirmed typificatory schemes. Contact affected the socialization of the subjects because they learned certain routines and played certain roles of rejecting same-sex homosexual friendships and the routine of actively avoiding gays and lesbians.

## **PARENTAL INFLUENCE**

Primary socialization is the earliest form of socialization, when the subject takes on the "significant others roles and attitudes, that is, internalizes them and makes them his [sic] own" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:132). To identify with them is to attempt to conform to the expectations one perceives they have toward oneself. An attempt is made to please and receive approval from these others who are significant. Through primary socialization the individual's first world is constructed. The family is one of the agents in which the world is constructed. The prescriptions of gender role are internalized as a child. The identity of (masculinity and femininity) incorporates itself with roles and attitudes (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:132). Homophobia can be functional for the homophobe as it assists in defining a homophobe's gender identity. The child learns early in life to act according to a gender role and learns that heterosexuality is the moral and normal part of life. They further learn that homosexuality is immoral and abnormal. Even though adolescents may want to display autonomy from their parents, many norms and attitudes are ingrained into the child and are very difficult to modify. The subjects in this study were influenced by parental attitudes; none of the subject's reported that their parents were pro-gay. Every subject reported that parents were anti-gay. Fathers were seen as very vocal whereas mothers were viewed as quiet in their disapproval of gays and lesbians.

He would be more negative than I am. He just finds them very disgusting....She would be more open than my dad. She is not that open about it. (M1)

My father doesn't like lesbians or gay men. He thinks that it is all disgusting. He is homophobic as you would say....She is more opened-minded towards the community but she still doesn't approve of it. (M2)

One subject reported that her mother was much more aware of political correctness and encouraged her to be 'politically correct'. Acceptance not for gay lifestyle, but acceptance in order to survive in a politically correct world.

She has been more exposed to more kinds of people. Races and everything else, so she is more , I mean I don't think she agrees with it, like she doesn't agree with it...even with me, she, she is like "you have to learn to keep your mouth shut and blah, blah, blah."(F3)

Another subject reported that his parents would argue if his mother defended gays or gay rights.

My father he hates them. Hate is the operative word. If you mentioned anything about gays, he just gets mad and blows up....Most of the time he doesn't want to hear about it, it gets him upset. ..I don't think she thinks that their normal. My dad's opinion is what matters. If she said anything positive, a fight would start.(M20)

The majority of the subjects were well aware of their parents views and believed that they would be cast out or rejected if they were gay. Some of the subjects claimed that they would be disowned or shot if they were gay.

He has voiced them in jokes, I would say making fun of them, the gay lifestyle, or just outright saying that, it is sick and saying he would shoot you if you were gay. (M2)

They think that it is unnatural and disgusting and they should stay at home....My father is probably worse than my mother. Cause he is bullheaded and stuck in his views and he thinks that it is unnatural and they should all be shot....He just talks, but he does hate them. My mom doesn't say too much. But I still think she thinks that it is unnatural. (F4)

Well my father is very against it. That is the way that he has brought us up to be, I guess, that is the right way.....well she doesn't agree with it, but not to the extreme. My father, a gay would be walking down the street and he would be making fun of them. He comes home with jokes, he makes comments. He has told all three of us kids that if we ever told him we were gay, he would disown us. (F6)

My Dad, he hates them. He has said that he would shoot me if I was gay....I mean I joke about it, and then he jokes and then he gets real serious about it, I mean he will say "don't bother coming home if you are gay".....Like if he sees them on TV he will go "fucking faggots." (M19)

These consequences are viewed as a normal reaction by a parent. The subject believes that it is the norm that parents dislike a gay child and that it is reasonable for the parent to stop loving the child. The subject grew up believing that being gay is the worst possible scenario and that being gay means that you are not to be accepted.

Not all the parents were vocal. Many did not or would not even discuss the issue of homosexuality. However, the subject was well aware of how their parents felt, or at the very least perceived, the attitude to be negative.

They are the same as me, they are not going to....they don't tell me stuff, but they know , that I think that it is wrong, but they're not going to tell me, they don't have too. (F10)

We never discuss it within. He is just ah, totally against it. We don't discuss it, the topic would probably disgust him so. I would imagine if I were gay that he wouldn't have anything to do with me. (M11)

Parents, I have no idea what they think. I don't think they care for them that much. I have never heard otherwise, so. (M15)

The subjects were exposed and socialized in an environment of hate, intolerance, rejection, and denial. It is not surprising that these individuals have negative attitudes towards homosexuals. Early on they are socialized to believe that homosexuality is the most evil sin, the

most contemptible desire, the most disobedient and harmful lifestyle. The subject believes that their parents views are rational and warranted. Or at the very least they justify or rationalize their parent's beliefs to make them credible.

## **PEER INFLUENCE**

Peers are an important component of secondary socialization. Secondary socialization "is the internalization of institutional or institution-based subworlds. Secondary socialization is the acquisition of role specific vocabularies" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:40). Masculinity and femininity and homophobia are reinforced in group settings. The subjects viewed their peers in three ways: as more open; more negative; and as very similar. Most of the subjects believed that their peers had the same negative attitudes towards gay men and lesbians.

Um, I think they have the same opinion as I do...I just think that they think it is gross and it is unnatural.(F4)

I think that they think that it is disgusting, the same as me. I mean, I don't know anybody that endorses gay rights or whatever...they would be made fun of, for sure. (M19)

My friends that are Christians, both male and female have the same views as me...It is a sin, it should not be done but you should still love the person anyway.(F9)

The second most common answer was that peers appeared to be more open towards homosexuality. However subjects viewed this openness as phony. They believed that their friends only accepted gays because of political correctness.

Most of them I find very political correct. A lot of them are like they agree with it, and they don't disagree with it. They just say "accept it," but I get the impression that is not actually how it is, that is just what they say.(F3)

They're more open than I am...They would be open in theory, but they would probably be uncomfortable, and probably make fun of him, not to him. (M1)

One subject even suggested that maybe her friends were gay themselves or at least bisexual.

I think a lot of them don't have a problem with it.... I think that girls are more accepting of it...I don't know , um, maybe, I don't know if they are themselves.(F8)

The least common answer was that the peers were more negative. Only a few respondents stated that friends were more negative. They believed that it was due to cultural or religious factors. For instance, one subject stated that his friends were from different cultural backgrounds

They are all against it. Culturally, they're not Canadian but they were born here. Maybe more so, as in being more violent or aggressive....well if they see a gay person, I know for a fact, that they would go up and harass them. (M12)

One religious subject claimed that non-religious friends were more negative because she felt that if you were religious you would be more accepting.

My non-Christians female friends are totally against it. They don't even like to talk about it. (F9)

Conversely, another religious subject felt that non-religious friends were more open towards homosexuality and that a lack of religion was the major reason.

As for my friends who aren't Christian, I think they are more lax about it...because they don't have that one defining thing in their life that says this is wrong and you shouldn't agree with this. (F16)

## **SOCIETAL FORCES**

There are six major social forces that are important elements of the social construction of an homophobe: the Media; Religion; Heterosexual Hegemony; Education; Emergence of Political Correctness; and Cultural/Geographical Background.



## **MEDIA**

The media play an important role in the social construction of a homophobe. The media portray gays and lesbians in stereotypical ways and devalues their existence. In this study the media affected the subjects negative attitudes in three ways. First the subject views the media as pro-gay, which creates animosity towards gay men and lesbians. The subjects believe that he or she must stand against the overwhelming, media-driven, moral decay that exists in the larger society. They believe that the media promote homosexuality and that the media are responsible for societal acceptance of gays and gay rights.

Well first of all, what I think of gays, my personal opinion, I just think that it is totally wrong. I basically think that it is filth, and nowadays, you know, how it is more coming out, then back then, you know, they have them more in public, on T.V., like in the movies. You see more gay characters and that. I think that it is all like commercials for gays, you know, like attracting people, you know to convert or to become gay or whatever... You never get anybody on T.V. who is going to come out and say it's wrong, it's bad....Pro-gay for sure, like 100%. (M11)

I feel today that it is built out of proportion in media, in a lot of avenues, and I think that in my perspective, there is air pollution that is killing off gay and straight people. I would prefer to see a lot more research and energy from a public relations point of view be put into that type of thing. (F18)

In addition, religious subjects believe that homosexuality on television is unhealthy and immoral

There is a lot of shows on television, that we shouldn't be watching. It is engaging in things that we don't agree with. (F16)

Just because I should not subject myself to that, it's not healthy. It is not healthy for myself personally, my spirit. It is not healthy for, the Bible says you're not supposed to or with violence or whatever. (F9)

Second, the subjects are affected by the media creation and maintenance of negative stereotypes of gay men and lesbians. Paradoxically, though the media are viewed as pro-gay, the

media promote anti-gay stereotypes and minimize gay rights through sensationalistic, biased, and misleading stories or new coverage. Some of the subjects acknowledged that they acquired stereotypes through the mainstream media.

You get that from the media. I mean I have seen homosexual women who are very masculine looking but I am sure that there are homosexual women who are very feminine.(F16)

Like from the ah, social, social stereotypes. They are feminine, they are in touch with their feminine side...I can't really, like what you see on T.V. or stuff like that, I couldn't really say.(M17)

In addition, media coverage of gay parades is skewed into showing outrageous or extravagant behaviour. Several of the subjects used gay parades as a way to back up their views that gays were immoral “freaks” who are not in any way part of mainstream society. These attitudes are reinforced by the media who neglect to cover other gay and lesbian sponsored events that occur during gay pride days. The media choose only to cover the most sensational stories and show the most provocative clips. Some subjects categorized all homosexuals as “freaks” or “show-offs” based on biased media coverage of gay pride parades.

I kind of find them humorous. I think that they make complete asses of themselves, which is funny. They want to be accepted, maybe they should act like human beings. (M20)

Third, the subjects are affected by misogynist, pornographic displays of lesbians. In the previous chapter, it was found that male attitudes of repulsion were affected by pornography. Males tend to view lesbianism as erotic and sexually stimulating. However, lesbianism is only accepted in a pornographic context that displayed women as sex objects that fulfilled male fantasies and desires. “Real” lesbians are viewed with aversion and their existence was minimized. One subject (M14) claimed that “no one wants to watch lesbians on TV, only in

pornos.”

## **RELIGION**

Religious doctrines influence many subjects. Only two subjects stated that their religious orientation accepted gays and lesbians (United Church and the Buddhist faith). However, one subject stated that he didn't agree with it despite his religion's acceptance. “It (buddhist faith) doesn't matter. It is just the my personal, and cultural background (that drives negative attitudes).” The other subject (F18) claimed that “we're all for them (homosexuals).” Eight subjects (six females, two males) claimed to be religious, of these four (three females, one male) considered themselves strongly religious. These individuals believed that the Bible was the most important source of their attitudes. Three subject's (all females) brought Bibles and scriptures to the interview. The subject belief is that the Bible is a source of their attitudes and beliefs.

Just because it, it's solid. It's there, it's written in [the Bible]...It's there, and that's not going to change (F9)

From the Bible. I wouldn't say that a pastor has driven it into me. (F16)

Because, I don't agree with the whole gay and lesbian relationship. Genesis said that God created man and a woman in his own image. And He said, go forth and reproduce. Well obviously a woman and a woman can't reproduce. Therefore, that is not a healthy relationship and that relationship should never have taken place. (F7)

However, almost all of the religious subjects qualified their beliefs by stating that homosexuals should be accepted or at least not persecuted.

It [church] is against...Just against it. They are not going to condemn anybody, but they will just say it is wrong. You're not supposed to be like that. (F10)

I am not against the person. Love the sinner, hate the sin, that is what it is. That's a common term, that goes along with everything. I am not going to hate someone because they abuse drugs. (F16)

Religious doctrine helps the subjects and larger society define wrong from right and religious views sustain sacred institutions such as marriage and family. Religious doctrine enables the subjects to justify their attitudes without guilt.

## **HETEROSEXUAL HEGEMONY**

This is the idea that heterosexuality is the natural, normal existence enforced through marriage, family, and social norms. Heterosexuality is a concept that is created and maintained by institutions in society. Theorists argue that masculinity is an important part of heterosexuality and an integral factor in the homophobic socialization. James Messerschmidt (1993:82) claims that "in contemporary Western industrialized societies, hegemonic masculinity is defined through work in the paid-labour market, the subordination of women, heterosexism, and the driven and uncontrollable sexuality of men." In addition, Connell (1995:77) further defines hegemonic masculinity as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women." In this study, hegemonic masculinity compels male subjects to believe that to be a man, one must be physically attracted to females.

I guess I am just a man, you know, ah, physically attracted to women. I can't explain it. I mean every normal guy likes to look at a nice looking girl, you know. (M5)

We live in a heterosexual society. It is natural to want to, you know, have sex with the opposite sex. (M19)

Also included in heterosexual hegemony is the view that marriage and family are vital components of normalcy, decency, and morality. Subjects used gay adoption and gay parades as examples as why heterosexuality is normal and homosexuality is deviant. All but one subject

viewed gay adoption as wrong. They believe that the child would be harmed in three ways.

First, there was the belief that the child would be harmed psychologically. The belief is that homosexuals who adopt would create problems and confusion.

You're just putting problems into that kids head.(F3)

How is a child going to grow up? I mean the child is going to grow up seeing this behaviour. The child is going to grow up thinking that it is right and it is not. I mean the child is going to grow up psychologically totally confused. (F9)

Second, the subjects felt the child would not receive a proper perspective and would receive unbalanced parenting.

I think that is wrong. I think that in a family, it should be mother and a father. I know it would be a lot different if you grew up with two fathers. I don't think that is right, should be a mom and a dad. It should have the right balance. (M17)

Because to me that is not a family situation. That's not, the child doesn't get two perspectives. It doesn't get to know the love from a man, and the love from a woman, like a mom and a dad. (F8)

Third, the subjects believed that the child may be "brainwashed" into believing that homosexual relations are okay.

The normal way of life is male and female. When somebody see two women as their parents they are going to think that is right. (F10)

I don't think that it is right that they should be doing that. Because then they are brainwashing their kid thinking that they are supposed to be with a man because I am with a man. (F4)

I think that children should be brought up with a mother and a father, not with somebody playing the role of mother and father. I think that when they go to school they would be teased....I think that they would be more or less brought up thinking that they should be doing what their parents are doing rather than making their own decision on their feelings. (M5)

In addition, many of the subjects lashed out at gay parades as being discriminatory against heterosexuals and sending the wrong message to society. They felt that society should focus on the family morals rather than gays and lesbians.

I think that is wrong. Like you don't see, um, married couples, you know, moms and dads, saying yeah, we are going to go out there and walk and support our kids. Support that we have been married for 25 years. You don't see that, you see, you see two women or two men, walking down the road, saying we should be able to have sex, and we should be able to adopt kids or whatever. No, that's not right. Start from the family first, not that. (F8)

I think that it would be totally different if I got out my "It is okay, to be heterosexual flag." See that's one thing too. I see these posters like "gay is okay," and gay rights and stuff, but like you know, you never hear anything about the other side, about heterosexual's rights and it is okay to be heterosexual. Like today's society, it seems, if you keep good moral values, if you keep your religious values, if you believe in a monogamous relationship, and you believe in the family, you're wrong. You know, I feel like a minority, with my beliefs. I really do.(F16)

That is a crock of shit. Why have a parade? Do heterosexuals have a fucking parade every year? (M15)

It can be argued that homophobia was created by heterosexual hegemony and that homophobic attitudes are maintained by a (heterosexual) culture of dominance. Kinsmen (1996:38) contends that "the dominant culture represents itself as the culture. It tries to define and contain all other cultures within its most inclusive range. Its views of the world, unless challenged, will stand as the most natural, all-embracing culture."

Chris Ingraham (1996) describes the heterosexual imaginary as a manner of cognition which denies the process of heterosexuality as an organizing institution. Heterosexuality, is taken for granted as naturally occurring and unquestioned, while gender is understood as socially constructed and principal to the organization of everyday life. The idea of heteronormativity emerges from this viewpoint. Heteronormativity is the view that institutionalized heterosexuality

legitimizes and directs humans social and sexual categorizations.

Poststructuralism demands that we abdicate the approaches of labeling theory and/or deviance perspectives which define gay and lesbian identities only in opposition to a natural, stabilized heterosexuality. Diane Fuss (1991:1) argues "the philosophical opposition between 'heterosexual' and 'homosexual', like so many other conventional boundaries, has always been constructed on the foundations of another related opposition." Young-Bruehl (1996:143) contends that "homophobia is an assertion of control over the category 'homosexual.' Homophobes try to secure the power of definition." It is these binary oppositions and definitions of homosexuality that are intrinsic to the creation and promotion of homophobia. It is imperative that we examine hegemonic heterosexuality as a socially constructed concept that created and maintains homophobic attitudes, perceived differences and stereotypes.

## **EDUCATION**

Many of the subjects stated that they did not receive any education relating to gay issues or the gay lifestyle. However, some subjects received negative information about gays and lesbians and believed that their teachers were anti-gay.

I think that they [teachers] were not very opened minded. I mean my city is not very racially diverse also, so if there was somebody different anything, I think that they just acted politically correct. I think a lot of them, had like you would see certain little things, little comments that would show that they were anti-gay or whatever. (F3)

I mean my phys ed teacher taught us that, you know in sex ed, that it is unnatural behaviour, and well he didn't say anything against gay people but said that it was unnatural. (M1)

they [teachers attitudes] would be negative. I have nothing against them and either do they. If that is what they choose than that is fine, but I don't think it should be publicized. (F6)

One subject even suggested that teachers with positive attitudes were gay.

Some teachers react very strongly, if you make a comment like 'faggot', in their class. Some teachers don't care. Some teachers really get upset though....Sometimes I think that they are gay. It doesn't bother me. It is just, if they get upset about a word a lot then I think maybe they are....If you get super-defensive about a word. Um, just like if a teacher was black and you said 'nigger' in his class, he would get mad, I'd imagine. So same thing if you say faggot to a teacher who is gay.(M2)

The high school environment is very conducive to anti-gay attitudes and behaviours. One subject summed a fairly typical high school experience .

In grade nine they started to do this [gay and lesbian] club...They said meet in this room after school. So all the guys, went down outside the room to see who went in. Just to check out, like not to do anything, just to find out in school, certain people you can say but certain people you can't say. But you wanted to know who the hell would go...In a high school environment you are going to have more hostility towards it. (M12)

The subjects were asked if they would be interested in learning more about gay issues and the gay lifestyle. They were asked if they would be interested in taking a course on gay and lesbian studies. The majority answered that they would be opposed to taking a course on gay and lesbians because they believed that learning more about gays and lesbians was not necessary. Many of the subjects implied that universities "shove it [homosexuality] down your throat."(M14)

In this society, it is so pro-gay, especially at the university...I don't think there is anything wrong with that, but sometimes they go overboard, to be politically correct, they shove it down your throat. (M20)

## **POLITICAL CORRECTNESS**

The subjects perceive that society is very "political correct" and they view political correctness negatively. The term political correctness has been transformed into a weapon of neoconservatism. Once used to poke fun at social movements and civil rights groups for



occasional lapses into rigidity, it has since become a popular catch phrase for neoconservative critique of higher education and left-wing politics. Aimed at anti-racist and anti-sexist initiatives within universities, colleges and other major social institutions, the term is used to discredit such innovations as employment equity, selective recruitment of students from groups that have suffered systematic discrimination, sexual harassment, affirmative action, women's studies programs, gay and lesbian studies. The term casts these "social improvements as forms of tyranny that destroy academic freedom and merit" (Richer and Weir, 1995). The subjects view that it is necessary to be politically correct in order to function successfully in today's world. The perception is that people have to be accepted, not due to merit, but due to the threat of sanction for not subscribing to a "politically correct" ideology. The subjects view non-acceptance as defensible behaviour because they are being honest about their beliefs. The subjects view people who accept gays and lesbians as influenced by political correctness, and as such they view them as insincere and hypocritical.

I think that I am a regular guy with normal views. I think that people are too politically correct. It is hard for anyone with different opinions to say anything, even though I don't think that I am a minority view. (M14)

In Western countries, they have all these, they will say this is human rights, or against whatever, blah, blah, blah, we can't discriminate, you know, how in the military now you can be gay. (M11)

People don't like anti-gay behaviour. It is treated like race. People are more hostile to you if they think that you are anti-gay. I mean I used to joke around and say things like they should be took out back and shot. But now my friends, you know, they would have a laugh but if they thought you were anti-gay, they would think it was not right. (M1)

Some of the subjects could not comprehend how anybody would accept gays and lesbians unless they were forced. Subjects perceived themselves as genuine and authentic. They believe that

they stand up for what is right, and denounce what is wrong, unlike others who lie about their true attitudes to conform to a “politically correct” world. Goffman (1959:165) terms this type of individual “renegades.”

Renegades often take a moral stand, saying that it is better to be true to the ideals of the role than to the performers who falsely present themselves in it... Such deviants are said to ‘let down the side’.

As “renegades” the subjects felt that they are compelled to oppose political correctness because political correctness damages society’s “true” values and norms. The individuals believe that political correctness opposes institutional heterosexuality. Within institutional heterosexuality, anti-gay attitudes and behaviour are a form of ideological control that signals membership in the heterosexual community. It further signifies that the individual is normal, moral, productive, family centered, and most important, ‘correctly’ gendered. Some subjects believe that this membership is being threatened by political correctness and they resent the perceived consequences of a politically correct society.

## **CULTURAL/GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND**

Some subjects felt that their cultural or geographical background is the major reason for their attitudes. One subject came from South Asia. He maintained that his cultural background was the reason for his negative attitudes. He believed that western society was much more accepting of gays than his culture.

Well the thing is I have been brought up in a different type of culture, different type of background. And my background isn’t like open to that. It is something new to me...The culture doesn’t allow you to be open. So I have never seen one. I didn’t even know what a gay person was. (M12)

Other subjects backed this sentiment but for different reasons. Many of the

respondents come from small towns or smaller cities, and that their rural or small-town background gave them a distinctly different attitude than people from large areas. Toronto was seen as a mecca for gays and gay rights. It was viewed as the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Many respondents acknowledge that smaller centers had much less tolerance and they believe that this plays a major role in their attitudes.

Like if it [homosexuality] does exist, you are going to be very quiet about it because I don't think that it is accepted there at all. So it [negative attitude] has to do a lot where I grew up and the environment... I think it [negative attitude] has a lot to do with where you're from. (F3)

There was also a belief that gays and lesbians existed only in Toronto and that Toronto was inordinately in favour of gay rights.

I am talking about a flaming fag, right from fag-town Toronto. I mean he lives in Fag-Town. I mean he is big time. like big time fag... Oh he has got the voice, he has got the walk, the fucker even has a poodle <laughs> like tell me that doesn't fit the image. (M5)

If you did your research in Toronto, 90% would be sympathetic... Because it is an everyday thing. Plus, the university crowd is different. (M12)

Although, subjects viewed Toronto as pro-gay, some subjects believed that this attitude is not genuine. The belief is that the residents of Toronto are more exposed to political correctness, and subsequently are forced to accept homosexuality.

I am sure that Toronto is more accepting than \_\_\_\_\_, I don't know if people accept it or they just put up with it. (F3)

In conclusion, this chapter examined several factors that influence attitudes towards homosexuals. These factors included language, stereotypes, contact with gays and lesbians, parents, peers, and societal forces which include the media, religion, heterosexual hegemony, education, political correctness, and cultural/geographical background.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **ANTI-GAY BEHAVIOUR**

Anti-gay/lesbian violence can come in many forms such as murder, physical assault, verbal harassment, vandalism, harassment, intimidation, defamation and discrimination. In this study, derision and avoidance have been added and the term 'anti-gay/lesbian violence' has been changed to 'anti-gay behaviour.' The term 'violence' implies acting in a rough or physical way and implies a power position of the perpetrator. Many cases of anti-gay behaviour are subtle, discrete, and are performed by individuals with little power in society. In the realm of this research project, anti-gay behaviour includes all types of behaviour that are deemed anti-gay. In this study there are six types of anti-gay behaviour that are reported that include, Derision; Avoidance; Written Harassment; Vehicular Harassment; Verbal Harassment; and Physical Harassment. In the first section of this chapter the types of incidents reported will be described and in the second section a theoretical explanation of anti-gay Behaviour will be attempted.

#### **TYPES OF INCIDENTS REPORTED**

##### **Derision**

The most common type of anti-gay behaviour is derision. Derision is when the subjects make joking, derogatory, or insulting comments about gay men and lesbians. In these incidents subjects presume that gay men or lesbians were not present. Nineteen out of the twenty subjects report that they have and still make derogatory remarks about gays and lesbians. Derision takes place in a variety of settings such as work, school, home and among peer groups. The majority of the subjects report that anti-gay language is harmful. They reasoned that it might harm impressionable children, it

was inappropriate language, and that younger less mature children may believe that it is okay to insult or assault gays and lesbians.

If it is around younger people, sometimes, it can get them thinking that, they can insult and assault gay people, when they are older. Because if they hear those words all the time. But I think that it is harmless among people that are mature. (M2)

It is harmful in a certain area. If you are saying it and there is a little kid there...and the kid runs around for a week saying that. (F7)

Paradoxically, even though anti-gay language is viewed as harmful, Derision is the most common type of anti-gay behaviour because it is generally regarded as a harmless activity when it is performed among heterosexual friends.

[Harmless] yes, between myself and another person, yeah, because that is as far as it goes.” (F8)

If it is not directed at them [gays], if it is just within the guys, I don't have a problem with it (M17)

However, a couple of the subjects (one of whom never used derision and the other who rarely used it) acknowledged that derision was harmful to the self-esteem of homosexuals and that verbal abuse could be a powerful weapon.

It would be harmful in it would just be shooting down the self-esteem level...to hear yourself being called a fag all the time. (F9)

I will give you a Bible verse. It says that in the bible that the tongue has the power of life and death. And I think that verbal actions can be stronger than physical actions. (F16)

Derision was used in four ways by the subjects. First it was used as a way to joke around with friends or family. For example, subjects claimed:

If you're watching TV, you would say it, if you see somebody gay, like “Look at that fag.” We joke to each other (M20)

I would mostly say in school, high school, family jokes, in my family... They would find it funny.(F6)

Second, derision was used to insult suspected gay men and lesbians and/or perceived heterosexual friends or acquaintances.

I could say it jokingly but kind of like in the back of my head I sort of mean it in a negative way...I think a lot of it is just in a moment of anger. You just want to say it, other times, you know, you hate someone and you want to say it, and other times it is that one little thing goes wrong, and you say it and you regret it afterwards. (F3)

I mean if we are having a conversation at work, I might ask them, "What are you talking about fags!"...Insulting it would probably come across that way. (F4)

Like if you approach a girl and you get no reaction out of her, you come back and you say "she is a dyke." (M11)

Third, derision is used as a way to get "a rise" or "get the goat" of friends. The goal is to get heterosexual friends agitated, angry, or upset.

Just to make them mad, because if you call a straight man a fag he gets very offended...because they are grossed out by the fact that fags like men. (F4)

Towards people that aren't gay. Like I have called them a faggot or a queer. But that's because they know that they are not gay. And it shouldn't, it isn't really offensive to them. Just to get his goat or whatever. (M2)

I think that it would be basically males. I don't think that we would say it to females...If they said something that seemed a bit queer. A little weird ...just to get a rise out of them. (F6)

Around my guy friends, you know, just to get a rise out of them ...I will tell them that they are gay or queer, like say "you're such a fag"..[they react] very strongly, sometimes they can take it, but most times they just get all defensive. (F13)

I would say it to guys probably because you would probably get the biggest rise out of them. They would take it seriously. They would take serious offence to that, and it something that is just you know, really big offence. (F7)

Two male subjects reported that they didn't find that type of behaviour humorous because it was too insulting. One subject states:

Why would you call a straight man a fag or queer? I mean that is the biggest insult, that I have ever heard in my life. (M5)

Fourth, subjects claimed it was part of the language system of larger society, much like a swear word.

I guess 'fag' is like a name calling thing, more than anything, it doesn't have the connotation that you are homosexual...you hear it all the time, you hear guys saying it all the time." (M17)

I mean I would say 'fag', but I don't know why I am saying 'fag'. I would say 'your such a fag' you know. And you don't know why you say it. Just like you don't know why you swear.(F10)

It is not something where people go. "look at that homosexual over there." Most people wouldn't say "look at that gay person over there", most people would say, "oh look at that queer over there" or "look at that fag over there."(F7)

It is amusing. It is an issue of today's society. It is the same way that when Princess Di, died, there was jokes within a week. Now that the overall excitement of Princess Di, there is no jokes anymore. But with fags, you live with them on an everyday type angle. There is jokes coming out all the time. The same as Newfies. (M5)

I really don't find it offensive because, they make jokes about Scottish people, they make jokes about women, jokes about blondes. (F18)

## **Avoidance**

Avoidance is when the subject ignores or avoids gay men or lesbians. In this study fourteen incidents of avoidance were reported by twelve subjects. However, it must be noted that these incidents were reported when asked about contact with gays and lesbians. Many of the subjects made a conscious effort to avoid gays and lesbians. For example a typical comment would be :

I would never hang around with somebody that I knew was gay. Or associate myself. (M5)

In the incidents that were reported, there were four reasons identified by the subjects.

First, contact would result in stigma for the subject. For example, friendship may imply homosexuality and contact may produce stigma especially in public setting.

He is a nice guy. I totally feel he is a nice guy but I don't want to have anything to do, like you know say 'hi', and stuff like that, but you know, when we go out for lunch or something, do you want to invite him? No nothing like that. (F3)

Actually I was friends with one guy until I found out (M1)

Second, the subject believed that he/she would feel uncomfortable and avoidance was a justified as a rational action.

I thought, eww, get out of my house. She was a friend of someone I went to school with. She came over and someone informed me after she was in the house that she was a lesbian and it grossed me out. (F4)

He seemed like a nice guy, but I would never have my hair cut by him. I would feel uncomfortable by him. (M1)

Third, the subject felt that it was necessary to avoid because the gay man or lesbian had displayed a sexual interest in them.

A friend of mine, who I had known for actually four years...she kind of comes up to me and said "I find you sexually stimulating". And that was like what?...I was totally freaked out, like I left right away...I haven't contacted the person since. (F9)

Fourth, the subjects claim that avoidance is used as a way to get rid of someone perceived as undesirable.

Like I said, one way to get rid of the guy, if he knew I didn't like gays, so it was a good way to keep him off my back.(M20)

## **Written Harassment**

Written harassment involves the writing of anti-gay words or graffiti on posters, bathroom walls, desks, and lockers. It can also be the writing of notes or messages that ostracise or insult



homosexuals or perceived homosexuals. In this study, three incidents were reported by three male subjects. In two of the incidents the subjects (M12, M19) reported that they were directly involved. The other subject (M11) reported that he had witnessed an incident.

The incidents reported by M12 and M11 were very similar. They involved the writing of harassing notes or messages on doors in the student residence. These notes had two purposes, first the notes were to ostracise and insult a perceived gay member of the floor. Second the notes were used to tease other floor members by putting their name along with the note to imply a "homosexual connection". For example, subject M12 reports what would be on a typical note: "so and so loved last night". This implied that a floor member was involved sexually with the perceived gay member. However, the members of the floor were not ostracised. They were included in the note because they were liked and the teasing was part of group membership. The message writing was considered an on-going event on the floor. One person leaves a note and includes a floor member's name, and then that person would leave a note with another person's name. The activity could be considered mutually reinforcing.

The incident was seen as a joke when it involved leaving floor member's names but the main purpose was to "bug" or "give him [perceived gay man] a hard time" Subject M12 stated

[In] the back of your mind, I would have hated to be him [perceived gay man].

The other incident involved the subject (M19) admitting to writing on desks. The purpose was to insult other heterosexual friends by joking that they were gay. The subject stated that he would write "so and so is gay, or so and so is a dyke". The subject then claims that the graffiti was the result of a series of exchanges. The subject claims he "writes something, then somebody else writes something."

Other subjects reported viewing "graffiti" on bathroom walls, desks, and posters. Graffiti is a prominent way to display hatred towards groups. Appendix G displays epithets that were observed in men's bathrooms at the University of Windsor.

### **Vehicular Harassment**

Vehicular harassment involves the yelling of insults or epithets from an automobile. It can also include throwing of objects or the stalking of gay men or lesbians. In this study, there were nine incidents reported by six subjects. Six of the incidents were reported by male subjects (M1, M5, M12, M19). Three incidents were reported by female subjects (F4, F6). (see table 2) In these incidents, the female subject admitted to being in the car and joking about gays. They claimed that they were upset at the gay men, however they did not yell at them. They report that male friends who were in the car(s ) performed the yelling and insulting.

**Table 2**  
**Vehicular Harassment**

Subjects	Incidents	vs. Gay men	vs. Lesbians
M19,M1, M5, M12, ,F6*, F4*	8	6	2

\*incidents were committed by a group of males and witnessed by females who were in the car.

The majority of the incidents were directed at gay couples. Two were directed at lesbian couples and four were directed at gay males. The subject justified the incident by claiming that the gay or lesbian couple were "holding hands" or "kissing in public." These incidents involved name calling and the following of the gay couple.

These two gay guys were holding hands or kissing or something on the corner and it was by an McDonalds and the guys seen it and were yelling and screaming at the two fags. They told them it was disgusting and other coarse words. (F4)

A couple of gay men were holding hands and ah, they started talking about it and they rolled down the window and yelled "Hey you fag! Hey you fucking fag!"(F6)

Other incidents involved the subject and peer group observing victims that appeared to be different or considered "deviant". For example M5 reported yelling at male prostitutes and at transvestites.

The other subject M19 reported that he and his friends yelled at two lesbians because of shaved heads and a mannish appearance. He claimed that "they looked like dykes" In addition, these incidents involved throwing objects and using sexual innuendoes. For example M19 yelled at lesbians taunting them to have sex with men and M5 yelled catcalls at prostitutes.

We saw some lesbians and yelled at them. They were, I think they were lesbians, you know, short hair, actually shaved hair, men clothes, looked like you know, dykes. We just yelled at them, like you need a man, want a real man, things of that nature. I can't remember the exact words. (M19)

After the bars we kind of went looking for a problem, we knew where the male prostitutes hanged out and male prostitutes, being male prostitutes are gay, 95% of the time. I didn't take a survey with them. We used to drive by and yell catcalls out the window and we used to throw shit out the window. (M5)

There are parallels with Comstock findings in the incident involving M5. Comstock (1989:105) contends that "most (anti-gay) violence occurs in a public area, specifically lesbian gay area...and involves pursuing, preying upon and targeting victims rather than reactions to chance encounters." This is especially true of young males who act aggressively in groups that mutually reinforce masculinity. By yelling and insulting "queers" or "fags", males are opposing homosexuality and affirming heterosexuality.

### **Verbal Harassment**

Verbal harassment involves name-calling and insulting gays or lesbians directly to their face.

It is similar to vehicular harassment except that vehicular harassment is from a distance whereas

verbal involves face to face interaction with a gay man or lesbian (or perceived). It must be noted that in the incidents of vehicular and physical harassment, verbal harassment was part of the exchange. However, in this analysis, only incidents in which the subject witnessed or harassed gay man or lesbians (or perceived) will be discussed. In this study , thirteen subjects reported either witnessing or taking part in verbally harassing (suspected) gay men and lesbians or perceived gay men or lesbians. Eight subjects witnessed (see table 3) and six subjects admitted to verbally harassing (see table 4).

**Table 3**

**Witnessed Verbal Harassment**

Subjects	Incidents	vs. Gay Men	vs. Lesbians
F10, F9, F8, F3, M2, F4	7	4	3
	2-by males	2-by males	0-by males
	3-by females	0-females	3-by females
	2-both	2-both	0 both

**Table 4**

**Verbal Harassment**

Subjects	Incidents	vs. Gay Men	vs. Lesbians
M20, M14, M19, M2, M5, M1,	6	5	1

In the thirteen incidents reported, ten out of thirteen incidents occurred in the school setting. The school environment gives the subject the ability to interact with other group members and the opportunity to come into contact with people that they deem to be lesbian or gay. The other three incidents occurred at bars and social gathering spots, in one incident the subject and a group of male friends let the perceived gay teen to join their group in order to make fun of him.

They would make fun of him but then it was always like we would have to bring him out with us. (F8)

In the other two incidents, the subjects perceived the incident as validating the mores of society. A female subject witnessed a male insult two gay males because they were dancing together.

These two guys were dancing. They weren't dancing close or anything but they were well, occasionally they touched and there was another guy dancing by them and he said "You guys are a bunch of fags! Get off the dance floor. (F4)

The other incident was when a subject witnessed girls dancing provocatively being called "tramps" and "whores". The subject did not feel that the lesbian or bisexual behaviour was appropriate. The subjects who admitted verbally harassing claimed to do it, for a variety of reasons. The most common was to ostracize and harass gays. They claimed that it was for a laugh.

There would be people walking down the hall and we would yell "Hey you fag!"... Usually they were just losers, you know, so we would bug and harass them and they wouldn't do nothing(M1)

The other reason was that the incident was a way to "show off to friends." For example one subject stated:

I guess I was showing off, you know trying to be funny (M19)

One subject claimed that his behaviour was also to joke or tease heterosexual friends. He claimed that he would imply a homosexual connection with one of his friends. His purpose was dual, to ostracise a gay teen and to tease friends.

I would say things that I knew that he could hear... like that he was gay and I guess I would make up rumours and tease my other friends saying H\_\_\_\_ liked them and H\_\_\_\_ wanted them. Sometimes he would react and say things but most times he didn't do anything.(M14)

Another subject claimed that he too wanted to ostracise, but his main purpose was to rid himself of a perceived gay male who he considered a nuisance.

I wouldn't say that we made fun of him, but once we heard he stuck up for gays, like gay bashing, we just said we should go out and kick the shit out of them. We knew, he was getting mad, so we got worse... plus both of us were trying to get rid of him and figured it was a good way. (M20)

Of those who witnessed verbal harassment, five out of seven claimed that they were not bothered by the incident. The first reason was that the subject did not like the victims. Therefore she was not bothered.

I don't like them, it's like my friends in a bar they have talked [insulted] to them, and I have, well, walked away. (F3)

Second, that the incident was viewed as part of life and there was no use in getting upset about anti-gay behaviour.

It didn't bother me that much. People are going to be like that no matter what. (M2)

Third, the incident was viewed as the victim's fault. One subject stated that gays and lesbians caused trouble by mixing with heterosexuals and one blamed the lesbian's personality.

Well, I really don't care, I mean it [verbal harassment] was not a big deal. I just think that gays shouldn't be in with the normal people. Cause it can cause trouble. (F4)

It was other personality things and the fact that she was a lesbian was [secondary.] (F10)

Fourth, the incident was viewed as funny. The subject claimed that the victim's effeminate behaviour bothered her, while making fun of him was amusing.

It was uncomfortable [the effeminacy] but then it would be funny to sit there and listen to guys make jokes and stuff.(F8)

Two subjects were upset and felt sorry for the gay victim. However one subject reported that she felt bad for him, but he had to expect what he received, she implied that he wanted the attention.

If you do that in front of a whole bunch of people, you got to expect to get something... We would say D\_\_\_\_\_ then just don't do that. You know, don't go down the halls like that. You know, you are just looking for something.(F7)

The other subject, felt genuine compassion and regretted not helping. She claimed that she was not a Christian at the time.

There was a lot of bad name calling and labelling and saying "Oh your a dyke" ... I felt awful for her. Just because people were, I mean bashing her, and I feel compassion for anybody... Unfortunately, I didn't defend her, I wasn't a Christian at the time, and I really didn't know what to say. (F9)

### **Physical Harassment**

Physical harassment involves punching, shoving, kicking, slapping or beating gay men or lesbians. In this study, five incidents were reported by two males and two female subjects.(see table 5) The assaults took place in settings that included weddings, bars, on the street, and in school. In three out of four the subjects were intoxicated and in four out of five incidents the assault was considered justifiable. They claimed that the incident was the result of the victim's actions. The incidents included: punching a family member who was gay; shoving a lesbian in a bar; kicking a school acquaintance; beating up a male prostitute; and punching a gay man in a bar while the subject worked as a bouncer.

**Table 5**

#### **Physical Harassment**

Subjects	Incidents	vs. Gay Men	vs. Lesbians
M15, F8, F6, M5	5	4	1
	1-in high school		
	2-in bar		
	1-on the street		

Subject M5 reported two incidents of physical harassment. The first incident, he claims occurred while working as a bouncer in a bar. He punched a gay man. He claimed that the customer was a junkie who was bothering him. While trying to throw him out of the bar, the subject reports that he had to use physical force. However, M5 claims that he probably used more force because of the customer's homosexuality.

I was mad at the fact that he was bothering me. And I was probably a little more aggressive towards him knowing that he was queer. (M5)

The other incident involving M5 occurred in a larger Canadian city. M5 claims that after going to bars, he and his friends walked through a district known for male prostitutes. M5 claimed that a series of verbal exchanges occurred and a fight ensued. The male prostitute was outnumbered and subsequently beaten.

A few times we met up with them on foot. And we tried to create a confrontation and a couple of times it worked, I remember a couple of times we actually hammered a couple of guys. (M5)

The other male (M15) reported that he had punched his uncle at his aunt's wedding. He claimed that his uncle and the uncle's boyfriend were acting inappropriate, he states that he was drunk and tried to dissuade his uncle from acting "gay". At that point a verbal exchange occurred and the end result was that the subject punched his uncle.

He was just being an ass at my aunt which is a good friend of mine's wedding, and I think that being gay, sort of had that small offence to him in the back of my mind, probably contributed to me hitting his nose... I mean it was my aunt's wedding and that was not appropriate. (M15)

The females in the study also reported some forms of physical harassment. F8 reported kicking a male acquaintance whom she termed a "bug". She states that she was not sure that he was gay and that he had only been suspected of being gay. She said that the incident had nothing to do with his being gay or being suspected of being gay. However, she did admit that his effeminate behaviour did upset her, and the end result was that she kicked him to get him away from her.

In high school there was one guy, where everyone was saying he was gay or whatever and I know I beat him up, he was such a bug. I don't know where it came from but he was, he didn't have the speech, but you know, he was more feminine, in his ways and stuff... Yeah, I hit him. Not because of that, not because people thought he was gay. Because he was a bug. He was always on your nerves kind of thing... I probably kicked him. Yes, I know I kicked him... His whole bothering me and acting like that [effeminate.](F8)



The other female subject reports that she shoved a lesbian in a bar. She states that she was intoxicated and was upset that two girls were groping and dancing provocatively in a dance club.

Actually I shoved a lesbian. We were at a bar with a bunch of my girlfriends, and this lesbian came up to one of my friends and started dancing with her and grabbing her and she just kind of told her she was not interested, and she backed off, and then this lesbian and another lesbian go dancing, and they started going at it on the dance floor. They were bumping us, while they were dancing or whatever they were doing. And I told them to get the bleep out of here or whatever. They wouldn't leave so, you know, and then they started nudging up against me, and I turned around and pushed them and told them to "Get the hell out of there!" (F6)

## **THEORETICAL EXPLANATIONS OF ANTI-GAY BEHAVIOUR**

Anti-gay behaviour is a direct result of a heterosexist society and homophobic individuals.

However, to say that homophobic attitudes are the primary motivation for anti-gay behaviour would be erroneous. Anti-gay behaviour is a combination of psychological and situational factors that interplay with societal condemnation of homosexuality and individual member's negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians. Thus, it is salient to acknowledge that the presence of homophobic attitudes does not necessarily mean that anti-gay behaviour will transpire.

The subjects in this study participated in varying types of anti-gay behaviour and to varying degrees. Even though they all clearly had negative attitudes towards gay men and lesbians, other factors were important in the evolution of their anti-gay behaviour. It is crucial to examine situational and psychological factors that can be important determinants of anti-gay behaviour. Criminological theories can aid in the understanding of these factors.

In this section an analysis of anti-gay behaviour uses a combination of criminological theories. The criminological theories that this analysis are framed around are Routine Activities theory, Sutherland's Differential Association, Aker's Social Learning, Hoffman-Bustamente's Role

theory, Adler's Masculinity thesis, Walter Miller's focal concerns, Sykes and Matza's Neutralization, and Hirshi and Gottfredson's Theory of Criminality.

### **Routine Activities Theory (Motivation)**

The main proposition of routine activities theory is that the rate of criminal victimization is increased when there is a "convergence in space and time of the three minimal elements of direct-contact predatory violations." The three elements are the presence of a motivated offender, suitable target and the lack of capable guardianship. The relative presence or absence of these elements is transmutable and "the risk of criminal victimization varies dramatically among the circumstances and locations in which people place themselves and their property" (Cohen and Felson, 1979).

A criticism of Routine Activities theory is that it does not explain how one becomes motivated to become a perpetrator. A theory that could be useful in explaining motivation is Sutherland's Differential Association. Differential Association asserts that criminal behaviour is learned through communication with other persons and that most social learning takes place within small intimate groups (Holman and Quinn, 1992:137). Males in our society are expected and taught to be socially and physically aggressive and sexually dominant. This socialization begins at birth and is firmly in place throughout early childhood (Comstock, 1991:106).

### **Differential Association**

Differential Association declares that learning includes the skills required to commit the crime, the motives and/or rationalizations for the crime, and the attitudes associated with the crime (Holman and Quinn, 1992:137). This learning consists of the accumulation of favourable and unfavourable definitions of various behaviours. Criminal behaviour occurs when favourable definitions of behaviour are given more weight than unfavourable ones. The balance between

favourable and unfavourable definitions of a specific behaviour is determined by the frequency, duration, priority, and intensity of contacts with groups/persons supplying the definitions (Holman and Quinn, 1992:137). The family is a group that presents favourable definitions of heterosexuality and unfavourable definitions of homosexuality. Since, most individuals grow up within a heterosexist family environment, the frequency, duration, priority, and intensity of negative definitions of homosexuality are magnified.

As illustrated in the previous chapter, many males and females learn homophobic attitudes, rationalizations, and justifications from their immediate families (small intimate groups). Although social learning is important in the construction of a homophobe, it is also important to recognize the influence of heteronormativity and/or heterosexism. They are important concepts in organizing of society, societal institutions, customs, and norms which are based in heterosexist discourse and practises. The custom of marriage and the norms of parenthood are defined predominantly as heterosexual, with little room for variation or modification. Nevertheless, in this study, parental socialization is very influential and anti-gay attitudes were imbedded into the subjects. Avoidance and derision are promoted by parent attitudes and actions. Some of the subjects report that their parents use anti-gay language

A gay would be walking down the street and he would make fun of them... "Look at those faggots, look at those fairies." (F6)

He [Father] will tell a joke about a fag or when we are driving down the street and we see some little nancy-boy or whatever, he'll, he might not use the term fag. I don't even think that is something that he uses. He usually comes up with some other smart ass remark about it. (M5)

However, parents would not condone some type of anti-gay behaviour such as physical, verbal and vehicular harassment.

**They [parents] would not be happy, with the fact that we were harassing people. No they would be real mad at me. They would be mad at me if I was harassing dogs. (M12)**

**In terms of anti-gay behaviour, peers are the most significant in presenting favourable definitions. Group conformity is an important element of teenage socialization. Conformity occurs when individuals adopt the attitudes and behaviour of others because of real or imagined pressure from them. Teenagers engage in all sorts of negative conformity behaviour, they use seedy language, steal, vandalize, and make fun of parents and teachers. Anti-gay behaviour is an important component of negative conformity. It produces group solidarity, cohesion and for males it validates masculinity. Those who do not conform are labelled different and subsequently teased or rejected as a "fag" or "queer". For example, many of the subjects claimed that individuals who were "losers", "weirdos", "fems", "unusual", and "strange" were considered or perceived as gay. One subject perceived a male as gay because he had the top hundred Elton John songs written in his binder. The subject (M20) felt that it was strange and he considered him a weirdo and he thought that the "wierdo" might be gay. For many if an individual acts differently or seems odd, they label that person as a homosexual, even if there is no concrete evidence to substantiate homosexuality. Another example is when subject M12, described a male on his residence floor who was perceived as gay. This individual was perceived as gay because he was a loner. "He doesn't talk to anybody. He goes out, to class, when you say 'hi' to him, he doesn't smile. He doesn't say anything." As a result of this "odd" behaviour, the "loner" was harassed by the floor members leaving condoms and harassing messages on his door.**

**Derision is an important part of this group solidarity. By making fun of or insulting gays or the gay lifestyle, the group member forges a bond with other members whom he/she views as**

similar. In this group context, derision is important in that it promotes intolerance and non acceptance of gays, gay rights and the gay lifestyle. Within the group, militant heterosexuality is the only option and homosexuality or acceptance of homosexuality is deemed unacceptable. Peers are an important part of learning anti-gay behaviour. Virtually every incident of anti-gay behaviour involved more than one person and almost every subject viewed their peers as an important part of their anti-gay behaviour. For example, many of the subjects used “we” to describe incidents.

He doesn't give me any trouble so I don't give him trouble. But he is unusual. We have a good laugh about him. I don't have anything personally against the guy. We would make fun of him behind his back. (M1)

We would be in a car, and we would just say to each other “look at those fags.” Just amongst ourselves. (F4)

Thus, from birth, childhood, adolescence and adulthood, the subjects learned favourable definitions towards anti-gay attitudes and behaviours.

There are three criticisms of Differential Association that need to be addressed. First Differential Association is too general. Second it fails to locate a female perspective. Third, it regarded juvenile delinquency as a form of behaviour based on values and norms of a deviant subculture when in fact these individuals are based in a larger conforming society.

### **Aker's Social Learning**

Ronald Aker's (1997) address the first criticism by adding three elements to Sutherland's differential association. These elements include definitions, differential-reinforcement, and imitation. Definitions are attitudes or meanings that one attaches to behaviour. “They are orientations, rationalizations, definitions of the situation, and other evaluative and moral attitudes that define the commission of an act as right or wrong, good or bad, desirable or undesirable,

justified or unjustified” (Akers, 1997:64-65). These involve general and specific definitions. General definitions include religious, moral, and other conventional values and norms that are favourable to conforming behaviour and unfavourable to committing any deviant acts or criminal acts (Akers, 1997:65).

However, the larger society has not defined anti-gay behaviour as unfavourable. It is an oxymoron as parents, teachers, and the legal establishment do not condone violence, name-calling, and harassment, yet in many instances they do not treat anti-gay behaviour seriously. This can be related to Graham Matza and David Sykes’ concept of subterranean values. Subterranean values “are hidden but ever-present underbelly of the dominant culture” (Einstadter and Henry, 1995:181). These are not different, delinquent, or deviant values but values recognised and promoted by mainstream society. For instance, mainstream society fosters heterosexism and homophobia. For many people in our society anti-gay attitudes and behaviours are not considered deviant but are considered typical, if not normal behaviour. For example, many of the subjects used the idea that it was “no big deal”, that it “wasn’t anything out of the ordinary” and that “it was a guy thing.” Subject M1 described his feelings after engaging in vehicular harassment.

Mild regrets. I don’t think that it was a big deal, I mean it is like anything else. If I drove by somebody of a different race and did that it would be wrong. I think that would be totally different. It is not acceptable in any case, but at least there is some basis for that.  
(M1)

Another subject explained that it was “only a guy thing” and that it was rational behaviour for her male friends.

Cause it is a guy thing, I think that it was to show their guy friends that they were not gay.  
(F6)

There is an attitude present that the anti-gay behaviour is not deviant, but typical behaviour in which young males engage.

Specific definitions direct the person to particular acts or series of acts (Akers, 1997:65).

Specific definitions of the situation are very important in this research. The situation was very important for the subject. In certain times, places and among certain people it was okay to use anti-gay language and to perform anti-gay harassment.

For example, Subject F4 stated that she used anti-gay language around her co-workers, and boss. But she would never use it around the clientele. Subject F7 reports that derisive behaviour was not appropriate in the home and F10 states that you have to be understand the context in which it is acceptable to use anti-gay language.

It doesn't really matter where it would be, I mean if I was somewhere, where I was supposed to be respectful. I wouldn't say anything. (F10)

Behind their back and within a peer group, the subjects are able to deride, insult or harass gays. They define the situation as conducive to that type of behaviour. Not only does the subject learn the techniques of anti-gay behaviour but they learn the context in which to perform that behaviour. The definition of the situation is very important to the subjects.

Differential reinforcement "refers to the balance of anticipated or actual rewards and punishments that follow or are consequence of behaviour. Whether individuals will refrain from or commit a crime at any given time depends on the past, present, and anticipated future rewards and punishments for their actions" (Akers, 1997:66). Of particular importance is an individual's association with a peer group. The techniques of anti-gay behaviour are learned through contact with peers. The individual becomes involved in binding relationships with peers and acquires the attitudes

appropriate to a position as a member of the peer group. This process involves rewards and punishments. The members are rewarded for expressing strong anti-gay views or behaviours and consequently are punished for not exhibiting anti-gay attitudes or behaviours. This reinforcement is important for the subjects; the rewards were that they engaged in positive group experience and the punishments were minimal. In fact, the punishment would have been stronger if the subject did not act or if the subject opposed the behaviour. The subject felt that he/she would have been ostracized along with the gay or lesbian victim. Subject M20 stated

If I started sticking up for queers, I would be the outcast.

Subject F9 believed that one of the reasons she did not oppose verbal harassment was because she may have been labelled a lesbian.

Why defend her? Then they are going to think that I am a lesbian too. (F9)

Thus, the subject knew that the punishment of not conforming to anti-gay behaviour far outweighed any moral stand.

Imitation refers to the involvement in behaviour after the observing of similar behaviour in others. Whether or not the behaviour committed by others will be imitated is contingent on the “characteristics of the models, the behaviour observed, and the observed consequences of the behaviour” (Akers, 1997:67). This is especially true in written harassment. The subjects were in fact imitating other’s behaviour; this behaviour was contingent on the behaviour of others. Also some of the verbal harassment was contingent on the imitating of others, the idea was to tease, harass, the same individual. They would view the victim as helpless, and non-threatening, by observing others mocking or insulting, the subject would be able to determine that the gay or lesbian victim was not a threat and an easy target and would imitate others harassing behaviour. Subjects F7, M1, M2, F9,



and M5, stated that a large number of teens would harass and perform name-calling on one individual. One subject stated:

Probably the whole school [calling him a fag]. Our school was really small.(F7)

They [two gay teens] were the joke of the school. (M5)

Subject F9 stated that a group of up to four girls would hurl insults at a lesbian, “They would gang up on her and start verbally abusing her.” The subject speculated that “they were just trying to show off for the people around them.”

### **Hoffman-Bustamente’s Role Theory**

The second criticism is that Sutherland (along with other sociological/criminological theorists) fails to explain gender differences in socialization and learning. The social experiences of males dominate in explanations of gender differences. Male perspectives are used to explain gender differences in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours. Feminists claim that women and their experiences of the world have been almost completely ignored in the theoretical formulations of social science. In the relatively rare instances where attention has been paid to women in society, females have been superficially placed into male-oriented explanatory frameworks. In this study of anti-gay behaviour, role theory or sex-role socialization is integral to address the shortcomings of Sutherland’s differential association. Role theory represents one of the first real attempts to analyze the phenomena of female criminals. It attempts to explain female criminality in terms of the social differentiation of gender roles in society. Role theorists have examined the significance of such factors as differential socialization, differential illegitimate opportunity structures, and differential social reaction for explaining female crime and deviance.

Dale Hoffman-Bustamente (1973) emphasizes the existence of culturally different methods of socializing girls and boys in advanced industrialized Western society. Girls are generally more closely supervised than boys. Girls are taught to be passive and domesticated. Boys are allowed greater autonomy and are encouraged to be aggressive, ambitious and out-going. Hoffman-Bustamente contends this pattern of socialization will vary; it will depend upon socio-economic class and cultural attitudes and values. However, socialization and later development of consciousness and self-perception varies considerably between males and females. As a result girls are usually expected to be non-violent and are not allowed to fight or use weapons; girls themselves tend to shrink away from violence and look for protection rather than to learn the skills of self-defence. According to Hoffman-Bustamente (1973) the differential socialization of girls is reflected in the types of offences committed by women and the nature of their participation.

The behaviours of the female subjects reflected differential socialization. Compared to males, female subjects did not perform as many incidents of anti-gay behaviour and the nature of their behaviour was secondary when it involved male companions. However, females were primary actors of anti-gay behaviour within a group of females. Some of the subjects witnessed some very damaging and demeaning anti-gay behaviour that was performed by females groups.

They were really trying to be mean to her. (F9)

Girls would make fun of him as well. (M2)

Another difference is the type of language that is used to put down disliked individuals of the opposite sex. For example, disliked males would be called "fag" or "queer", disliked females would be called "slut", "whore", or a "tramp". Females were socialized to use language that is a form of male domination and female subjugation.

There are two major limitations of this theory: first there is a failure to situate gender roles within a structural explanation of the social origins of those roles. Role theorists do not substantially challenge the prevailing belief that gender roles and gender differences are "natural". Gender is a social construction that is maintained by the belief that males and females are intrinsically different. However, beside obvious physical differences and differential socialization, males and females are the same.

The other major limitation of role theory is that the theory fails to discuss motivation as an important part of female criminality, for example, the theory does not explain why, even though women are socialized into conforming patterns of behaviour, a considerable number engage in crime. In this study, several of the female subjects engaged in anti-gay behaviour. It is important to look at why some of the females engaged in this behaviour.

Historically female crime has been ignored by criminologists and criminological theories. Warner Einstadter and Stuart Henry (1995:260) state that "simply predicting female behaviour by reference to male behaviour is unlikely to work. This is precisely the problem confronting all our theories, they barely acknowledge let alone incorporate existing differences between men and women.". Nevertheless, it is important to note that with the emergence of female equality, there has been a shift in traditional female roles and concerns. It can be argued that more females have shifted to the traditionally masculine characteristics and females engage in behaviour that historically was constructed for males. In order to fulfil any new social roles women find themselves in, Freda Adler (1975) contends that the women's movement enabled women to express their true nature that is as pugnacious, belligerent, contentious, assertive, and goal oriented as males. However, Adler fails to acknowledge that in fact there is no "true" nature for the sexes. Masculine gender traits such as

assertiveness, aggressiveness, and pugnacity are a social construction that developed because these traits have been a way to achieve and maintain a power position. In essence, "criminology theories are unlikely to explain female crime and may even miss what is crucial to explaining male crime, that is the social construction of masculinity" (Einstadter and Henry, 1995:260) Females and males are socialized to believe that in order to gain and maintain power, they have to act according to traditionally male traits and to subscribe to traditionally male roles and norms.

### **Miller's Focal Concerns and Adler's Masculinity Thesis**

A possible motive for anti-gay behaviour can be addressed by examining Walter Miller's focal concerns. Miller's focal concerns are trouble, toughness, smartness, excitement, fate, and autonomy (Holman and Quinn, 1992:203-204). It must be noted that Miller's focal concerns are a social construction of masculinity; they are not inherent traits in males. They are constructed to promote and maintain male domination and patriarchy. Miller constructed these concerns based on a "lower class culture", however, many males of the lower, middle, and upper class subscribe to these concerns. They have varying degrees of affiliation, in that upper class may advocate autonomy and smartness, while the lower class may advocate toughness and trouble, but in essence, males are taught at a very early age to subscribe to these focal concerns. It is also important to note that some of these focal concerns (toughness, autonomy, smartness, excitement) are prized in Western society, they are not deemed inappropriate by many males and females.

A combination of Adler's (1975) masculinity thesis and Miller's focal concerns is salient to aid in our understandings of anti-gay behaviour. Adler's masculinity thesis states that as women take on the social roles traditionally performed by men, women will become more masculine in their thoughts and actions. Adler's position is that as the result of moving from traditional homebound

social roles into positions of power and influence, women like men become more competitive and aggressive. Miller has been criticized for neglecting females, however, the Adler masculinity thesis can aid his theory by showing that some females subscribe to some of these same concerns that were historically deemed masculine. By adding Adler's proposition (that more females are engaging in traditional "male" behaviour) to Miller's focal concerns, we are able to address female and male motivations for anti-gay behaviour.

### **Trouble**

According to Miller, trouble means negative interactions with officials from the police or school. These interactions could involve fighting, drinking, drug taking, and sexual behaviours. For a lower class gang or group, trouble means that the individual does not subscribe to conformist norms. In this study, both male and female subjects avoided trouble; in fact it can be argued that anti-gay behaviour is conforming. One subject did fit into Miller's typology, this subject (M12) came from the "ghetto" of Toronto and he believed that the mentality in his neighbourhood was much more aggressive and he viewed police as the enemy.<sup>4</sup>

You don't really have a fear of police down there. We view police as the enemy type deal. If the cop stops you, big deal. (M12)

Nevertheless, he acknowledged that the police would not take vehicular harassment very seriously, even though he believed his behaviour to be serious enough to warrant attention.

I am sure that if somebody were doing that to me, if I was a cop, I would take their ass to jail. Another thing is that in our minds, that wasn't like, even I know that it wasn't a big deal [to police] but I know that [it should have been]. (M12)

Anti-gay behaviour is a way for the subjects to stay out of trouble. They were not afraid of punishment or ostracism. A few reported that they would fear trouble if they were harassing

members of another race and viewed punishment for racist behaviours as legitimate. Overall the subjects did not see themselves as getting into trouble; they viewed their behaviour as way to seek excitement and/or validate toughness with minimal consequences.

### **Toughness**

Miller postulates that toughness for lower class males means "macho" or "manly", often in a rough way. It can be argued that anti-gay behaviour is an effective way for male youths to display toughness. In this study, the majority of the subjects would not use "toughness" in the sense of being physical. Their toughness would be more how they verbally harassed or threatened gays or lesbians. They wanted to present an image that they were tough by intimidating perceived gays and lesbians. They were able to intimidate by outnumbering victims and by not fearing reprisals. One subject reported

We would make fun of them, and ask them about their sex life, and they would usually just ignore us... Usually you know, they wouldn't fight back or just ignore us.(M1)

Females did not subscribe to Miller's idea of toughness because toughness (especially physical) has been socially constructed as a male trait. The females in this study would not want to be perceived as manly. However, toughness can be thought of as strength (both emotional and physical) and females in this study wanted to show that they were morally strong and just. For example, female subjects reported why they used derisive language.

With my friends, if we were sitting in the mall or something. Yeah if someone was over there doing something in public that they shouldn't have been doing. (F7)

You want attention, like you only gonna get negative attention. ... I don't think that it [teasing] is acceptable, but I don't believe that it is acceptable to go around flaunting it. (F10)

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4 Subject M12 used the term "ghetto" as a reference to his belonging to a lower class neighbourhood.

For females toughness revolves around the issue of morals while males believed that toughness was to be aggressive. Males thought that aggression or aggressiveness was a justifiable trait. One subject states:

I think that has to do with the neighborhood, the community we came from, it is more aggressive. Like is in Toronto, the ghettos of Toronto. There is a lot of gangs, there is a lot of drugs. That sort of deal, my friends aren't in a gang or anything. That is just what their mentality is like. (M12)

Another subject claimed that his physical harassment was due to his need to get "aggression" out of his system.

I am sure that we got a good laugh out of it. Oh yeah, sure it was funny, to get some aggression out. (M5)

He justified his actions by claiming that it is normal for males to get "aggression out" and that he was not doing anything deviant, or uncharacteristic of typical male behaviour.

### **Smartness**

According to Miller, smartness is the ability to cheat, hustle, or con others. It is important for youths to have street smarts. In this study smartness could be considered the way in which the subject verbally harassed gays. In some instances there was a competition to see who could come up with the best epithet. For example subjects viewed their behaviour as a competition for laughs and respect.

Sure it was fun, because when you were around people, the best comment got the best laugh. (M5)

It is like a continuing thing on the floor. It is like, one person will write something and then...like who will write the best. (M12)

## **Excitement**

Excitement refers to thrills/danger. It is important for youths to relieve the tedium of a boring existence. The majority of the incidents of anti-gay behaviour were the result of the subjects seeking excitement. Derisive behaviour is seen as a way to have fun with friends.

It is just the way it is, we are just having a good time. And it is easier to say that you are not going to do it. But you can't help it. My ideal is not to, but I do it anyway. (M1)

However, derision is very safe behaviour for the subjects to engage in; there are few sanctions if any for individuals who make fun of gays and lesbians.

Vehicular harassment is somewhat more risky behaviour. Several of the subjects (M1, M5, M12, M19) claimed that they did it "for a laugh", that they "were looking for a problem", and that it was "just pure fun". One subject stated

Just pure fun, I guess (laughs) like excitement. See that's the thing I don't condone it personally, yes I went along with it, yes, I am guilty like everybody else, but I don't condone it. (M12)

In written harassment, the message and the graffiti writing could be the result of the subjects looking for excitement. The subject (M19) reported that he wrote on desks during lectures because he was bored. In the incident in which harassing notes were left on a perceived gay male's door, there were sanctions imposed by the resident assistant. The subject claims that note writing stopped, but continued shortly afterwards. This could be the result of more risk for the perpetrators. If the event was sanctioned, then it would be more risky. The subject (M12) reported that note writing was "fun".

Verbal harassment and physical harassment especially directed at "outcasts" were viewed as fun and they were viewed as somewhat risky. Some of the subjects who verbally harassed gays and



lesbians, viewed it as a joke. One of the subjects (M5) who physically harassed and assaulted a male prostitute, and was also involved in verbally harassing male prostitutes and transvestites viewed the incident(s) as fun.

You come out of the bar and you are looking for action, whether you are looking for a fight, or you just want to laugh. (M5)

The other incidents of physical harassment were viewed as justifiable events that were brought on by the victims actions.

### **Fate**

Fate refers to the individuals lack of control over what happens to himself/herself. This is the belief that there is an other worldly power that produces destiny. This concept of fate can be related to the "mission crimes". Mission crimes are the rarest form of hate crime and is when the perpetrator seeks to rid the world of evil by disposing of the members of a despised group (Levin and McDevitt, 1993:89). A perpetrator of a mission crime "believes that he [sic] has a higher order purpose in carrying out his crime. He has been instructed by God or in a more secular version, by 'Der Fuhrer, the Imperial Wizard, or the Grand Dragon to rid the world of evil by eliminating all Blacks, Latinos, Asians, Women, Gays, or Jews" (Levin and McDevitt, 1993:89). None of the incidents could be considered mission crimes, however, in a few of the incidents, the subject viewed it as "accidental." For example, one subject (M19) inadvertently insulted a gay man. He claimed that he was speaking to friends and he did not realize that a gay man was directly behind him.

I was sitting with my friends at our table in the cafeteria, and my friend talks about what do you think of F—. And I go "he is a fag", and he should, you know, well become a normal person, or something like that. And then everybody starts laughing and saying stuff, and pointing behind me. Well he was there... It was an accident. (M19)

Other subjects (M14, M1, M12, M19) claimed that they drove around with friends looking at girls and they just happened upon gay couples.

On a few occasions, you know, you go out and drive, just cruise the streets... Usually we just look for girls, you know, look at pretty girls. We saw two gay guys holding hands and we yelled at them. (M14)

Thus, fate is the idea that the event wasn't really intended, it just happened to work out that way. The subject can use fate to justify an event and reduce responsibility.

### **Autonomy**

Autonomy means achieving or seeking independence. Young people value their freedom and autonomy from their parents. Autonomy is the most important focal concern for the females in this study. For females, autonomy is the ability to empower themselves and disempower males. Several females in this study (F4, F13, F7, F6, F10)) teased and insulted male friends. The females did not view this behaviour as a joke, but as a way to emasculate their male friends. They used derision to "get a rise" out of males. They reported that their male friends got very "defensive" and angry.

Just to make them mad, because if you call a straight man a fag he gets very offended.. No, I use the word fag more, I hardly ever use the word dyke or lez. Men are more offended when you are just joking around.(F4)

I think that it would be basically males. I don't think that we would say it to females. If they said something that seemed a bit queer. A little weird...Just to get a rise out them. (F6)

Just his reactions and things like that. Like I just know he [brother] is really homophobic, like, if someone were to make a joke about him being somewhat feminine, and he would get upset. (F10)

Jokes or insults directed at males by females were taken very seriously. The subjects did this to display power and to break away from male dominance. Females would not have physical strength to

intimidate or threaten males, but the subjects viewed questioning a male's sexual orientation as a very powerful weapon.

### **Sykes and Matza's Techniques of Neutralization**

Another criticism of differential association is that Sutherland regarded juvenile delinquency as a form of behaviour based on the values and norms of the deviant subculture. David Sykes and Graham Matza felt that this assumption was improbable because the world of the delinquent is located in the larger world of those who conform. According to the subculture approach, there would be no feelings of guilt by the delinquent who believes that his/her behaviour is morally correct (Holman and Quinn, 1992:139). However, evidence suggests that many delinquents do have feelings of guilt and remorse. In this study several of the subjects felt remorse for their actions.

I regret it somewhat, because I am not a very violent person. I am not into abusing people through words. (M12)

I felt kind of bad [about verbal harassment], I didn't want to hurt his feelings. (M19)

I regret the way I acted [physical harassment]. But I will never go to that bar again. (F6)

But at the same time the majority of the subjects justified their actions. Sykes and Matza developed a neutralization and drift theory that can be useful in this analysis. The neutralization and drift theory maintains that the delinquent cannot escape societal condemnation of his/her deviance. The delinquents favourable definition of delinquency outweigh his/her connection with law-abiding behaviour, however, the delinquent must answer to conforming society. The behaviour cannot simply be justified as an remote system of values and norms. The delinquent must use the rationality of the dominant culture to justify his/her actions (Holman and Quinn, 1992:140). Sykes and Matza's techniques of neutralization include: Denial of Responsibility; Denial of Injury; Denial of Victim;

**Condemnation of Condemnors; and Appeal to Higher Loyalties.** These techniques are important in understanding how the subjects justify anti-gay behaviour.

### **Denial of Responsibilities**

The first technique is denial of responsibility. The perpetrator believes that an assortment of social forces or perhaps other persons are really responsible for their actions. In this study, there were three ways that the subject denied responsibility. First, the subject(s) claim that he/she was not totally responsible. They claim that they were going along with “a group mentality” or peer pressure. One subject claimed that the behaviour was the result of a “group mentality.”

I guess, that it is the group mentality. (M12)

Others claim that they would have been ostracized if they did not go along with the activity. For instance, subject (M20) believed that the only option was to make fun of the gay person along with the group or the group might make fun of him.

I saw him being made fun of. I didn't know why. [By] guys he knew from high school, and I thought what am I doing hanging around this guy? I felt really self-conscious, I mean that could be me being made fun of by those guys.

Second, the subjects partly blamed their actions on intoxication. In three out of the five incidents of physical harassment, the subjects claimed to be “drunk.” Two of the subjects believed that their intoxication was part of the reason for the assault. One subject (M5) stated

I was drunk when it happened, I didn't think much of it.

#### **A female subject claims**

I was pretty much drunk at the time.(F6)

Third, the subjects blamed society, by claiming that other people engage in the behaviour and it was “not a big deal.” For example one subject (M19) claimed that it was “just normal talk” and

subject (F7) claimed that everyone uses anti-gay language and that it was just part of everyday talk.

This idea can also be related to the next concept of Denial of Injury. The subject did not feel responsible and also believed that there was relatively little harm done.

### **Denial of Injury**

Denial of injury is when the perpetrator minimizes the harm done to the victim. In some instances the incident is seen as a joke. The subjects in this study claimed that incidents were “just jokes” or that they were just “harmless fun.” One subject (M2) claimed that making fun of two girls by calling them lesbians was just a joke. He states “I just took it as a joke.” Other subjects (M1, F4) claimed that the incident was only in fun and that they were just having a good time.

I don't know, it is fun I guess, I mean it is just talk. (F4)

It is just the way that it is, we are just having a good time. And it is easier to say that you are not going to do it. But you can't help it. My ideal is not to but I do it anyway. (M1)

Another subject (M19) claimed that an incident of vehicular harassment “was only yelling” which implies that there was no harm done to the victim.

### **Denial of Victim**

Denial of Victim is when the perpetrator will claim that the act is one brought on by the victim. The victim is seen as deserving the injuries. This involves dehumanization and victim blaming. This was a very common activity among subjects that were directly involved in incidents and the subjects that witnessed incidents. For example, subjects that witnessed the incident used terms like “you have to expect it” and that “they are drawing attention upon themselves.”

For example subject F3 witnessed verbal harassment

I don't think that it [teasing] is right. I could never swear that I would never do it. I don't think that it is right. I don't agree with it, well maybe under certain circumstances. If they

want to go somewhere like, if you want to put it all out on the table and you want to like totally let your life story be known to everybody, then you kind of have to take, if someone is not going to accept that, and they don't want to hear it, then you kind of have to take the negative feedback that they are going to give you....So if you keep it quiet then I don't think that it is right. If you tell everybody then you kind of have to expect what you get. (F3)

Another subject (F18) who had heard about a verbal altercation from a gay employee summed up her feelings

Well I think that, I think that obviously if you are going to put a sequin outfit on and go in the subway, whether you are heterosexual or gay, you are going to draw attention on yourself....I felt badly for them. Sure I did, but ah, I said you can't have it both ways. I mean if you are just going on your business in an ordinary manner. I said they are not going to single you out. But if I said your going to camp it off, then they will. But I said that I think that would happen to me too. (F18)

She (F18) further claims that other "gay" acquaintances did not encounter verbal assault because "they are pretty straight acting gays. They are not inviting anything."

Subjects who were directly involved also used this reasoning, for example subject (M19) stated "those guys (gay couple) probably expected the attention. I mean you walk around like that what do you expect?" In four out of the five incidents of physical harassment, the subject used victim blaming in their description of the event. One female (F8) claimed she kicked a perceived gay man because he was a "bug". The other female subject (F6) claimed that she was being bumped by lesbians and that they were acting inappropriately in the bar. "They started going at it on the dance floor". One male subject (M15) also used this argument by stating that his gay uncle was acting "inappropriate" at his aunt's wedding. He claimed that he "was grossed out" and that his uncle was just being an "ass." The other male subject (M5) claimed that while working as a bouncer, a gay customer was pestering him for drugs, and he was justified in his actions.

### **Condemnation of Condemners**

Condemnation of Condemners is when perpetrators condemn authority figures or individuals who are in a position of control. The condemners are accused of being individuals who have either committed or condoned similar acts in their lives but now need to pointlessly discipline the perpetrator. In this study, this category had little relevance, because none of the subjects were punished for their actions. However, the issue of political correctness was used. One subject (M1) claimed that he did not verbally harass gays to their faces (only made fun of them to their backs) because "it is not the thing to do it in these times." This quote implies that it was acceptable in the past but not today. The idea is that people in authority positions are now pointlessly punishing individuals for their anti-gay attitudes and possible behaviour. Several of the subjects gave the impression that they were upset with the idea of political correctness and the implications it had on society. Another subject (M2) claimed that high school teachers who spoke out against derision in the classroom, were probably homosexuals. The idea is that only gays would condemn such behaviour, as only they would find it offensive.

### **Appeal to higher loyalties**

Appeal to higher loyalties means that the group supersedes any social or moral obligations felt by the individual to society. The needs of the gang or peer group take precedence and the act is justified in order that higher loyalties are not breached. In this study almost every incident was performed within a group context. The acts of derision were exclusive to being in a group. The idea was to make fun of or insult another devalued group and to gain acceptance into the group of people that are performing the derisive behaviour. The concept of imitation (which was examined earlier) is important at this stage. To gain acceptance into your group, you must imitate the other's behaviour.

If they make a joke about gays, you as a group member must laugh. If they insult or pick on an out-group member (homosexual), you must not defend that person.

In acts of verbal harassment and vehicular harassment, some of the incidents were contingent on others being around. Individuals would not drive around insulting homosexuals for their own benefit. They did it to get a response from other group members. In some of these incidents the subjects acknowledged the importance of the group in which they belonged. Female subjects who witnessed the events, claimed that it was “guy thing”. Others claimed that it was a way to “show off” to friends. The idea is that impressing the group was the most important element in the incident.

### **Routine Activities (Suitable Target and Lack of Guardianship)**

According to the Routine Activities theory, motivation is not the only concept that needs to be present in order for a crime to occur. There must be a suitable target and lack of capable guardianship. If motivation was the only factor there would be more incidents of anti-gay behaviour because of the vast heterosexism and homophobia that is present in society. According to Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson (1979) a suitable target must be present before a crime occurs. How does the subject determine whether the victim is a suitable target? Travis Hirschi and Michael Gottfredson's theory of criminality will aid in this part of the analysis.

### **Theory of Criminality**

Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) developed a general theory of crime designed to account for criminal behaviour. Gottfredson and Hirschi claim that human behaviour is motivated by the self-interested pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Gottfredson and Hirschi contend that suitable targets would be chosen by this classic principle



the preference for simplicity over complexity implies that potential targets will be selected based on ease with which they can be victimized. The same considerations lead to the conclusion that targets that provide immediate benefits will be selected over targets that occasion delay... Targets that pose little risk of detection and little risk of resistance will be chosen over those with greater risks. (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990:13)

According to Gottfredson and Hirschi there are three features of events that enhance their pleasure or minimize their pain. These features are rapidity, certainty, and minimal effort.

### **Rapidity**

Rapidity, is when criminal events take place immediately. It is postulated that pleasure is enhanced by the rapidity with which it is obtained. Within the group, rapidity is an important element; the quicker the event occurs, the less chance that the individual group members would be able to take a moral stand against the anti-gay actions. The possible punishments associated with anti-gay behaviour would be minimized by the rapidity of the actions. The subject views his/her behaviour as “fun, at the time” and he/she is unable to feel guilt during the event because the event happened very quickly.

Rapidity also affects the availability of guardianship. The quicker the act occurs the less likely it will be viewed by a third party, who may deem that act inappropriate. For example, subject (M5) claimed that police would never have intervened in his harassing of transvestites and male prostitutes. He (M5) claims

We were out of the area so quick it [police involvement] really didn't matter. (M5)

Rapidity occurs within disputatiousness which is a concept created by David Luckenbill and Daniel Doyle (1989) to explain interpersonal disputes. Luckenbill and Doyle (1989) claim that an interpersonal dispute is the result of three consecutive events. First, “naming” must occur, this is when the victim “perceive(s) the negative outcome resulting from another's behaviour as an injury

for which the other is to blame.” Second, “claiming” must occur, this is when the victim expresses a grievance and demands reparation from the perpetrator. Third, the perpetrator must reject the victim’s claims and the interaction is transformed into a dispute. Luckenbill and Doyle claim that consequences could include either “outright capitulation through mobilization of third party assistance to perseverance and use of force.”

In this study, disputatiousness is an important component in the interaction process of anti-gay behaviour. Many of the subjects speculated that violence would result if the (suspected) gay man defended himself from a verbal attack.

If that [violence] were to happen it would have to be threatening, like they would have to come up to us, if they’re were, lets say, to respond, they were to verbally respond and start an altercation, I am sure that something would have happened that night. (M12)

[Victims of vehicular harassment did] nothing, but what could they do? They would have been stupid, because I am sure that the guys that I was with would have done something... Because they are rough, and kind of drunk, but nothing happened. (M19)

Some of the interpersonal disputes resulted in capitulation, for example, a female subject reported that in an incident of vehicular harassment, third party intervention prevented violence from occurring.

And one of the guys got out of the car, cause the fags were walking toward the car because they were upset. And the guy who was driving made him get back into the car and we drove away... I don’t think that we should be fighting with them. I don’t think they should be doing it [kissing] on the street corner though. (F4)

In another incident, subject M12 was prevented from punching a gay male who had “pinched” his “breast” at work. The subject claims that a female co-worker persuaded him not to act because the incident was not “worth his job.”

In the incidents of physical harassment, disputatiousness was present. Subject (M15) (who punched his uncle) claimed that he became involved in a verbal exchange with his uncle before the altercation. Subject (F6) (who shoved a lesbian in a bar) claimed that she told the dancing lesbians “to get the hell out of here” and then they “started nudging up against me...and I turned around and shoved them.” Subject (M5) provides a classic example of disputatiousness;

And you go looking for these male prostitutes, or whatever, you know, you walk by and you say something and maybe, this guy doesn't say anything to you but, ah, if he doesn't no big deal, you are not going to turn around and harass him, and you walk by another guy and you say something to him and he might say “fuck you” and you turn around and you say “What did you say?” I said “fuck you, don't call me a fag,” or whatever . “Why you are a fag.” Then you would get in his face and then shit happens, you know, you end up hammering the guy.

Goffman (1967:239-258) claims that individuals engage in ‘character contests’ which are playful or serious exchanges of insults. Goffman claims that instigators of a character contest can suddenly find that they have gone too far which destroys their own faces in the eyes of those whom they had hoped to impress. Goffman contends that one strategy for minimizing risk is to choose a victim for whom the audience will have little sympathy. Anti-gay behaviour minimizes risk for the subjects. Subjects would be encouraged to participate in the anti-gay behaviour and they believed that they would be ostracized if they did not conform to the group mentality. The result is that anti-gay behaviour is a mutually reinforcing “character contest.”

### **Certainty**

Second, in order to be pleasurable events should be certain in their outcome. This includes the threat of punishment must be absent or minor. However, there must be some degree of punishment for the incident to be considered exciting because it adds pleasure. Nevertheless, in anti-

gay behaviour the subjects did not feel that their actions would be punished. Subject viewed gays as “weaklings or “losers” who wouldn’t fight back.

Well black people are perceived as stronger, whereas gays are seen as weaklings. (F6)

Views of victimization with impunity may also decrease the effects of available guardianship. For instance, perpetrators may not fear police involvement, legal prosecution, and sanction from other authority figures such as resident assistants and teachers. Thus, perpetrators may not be deterred from engaging in anti-gay behaviour. Some of the subjects stated that the police would not would not be interested in the event.

It was just yelling at the person the police wouldn’t care about that. If it was a person of a different race, the police might have done something. I think that there would be a stronger reaction to that. (M1)

Another thing is that in our minds, that it wasn’t like a big deal...but it is still harassment. I mean if they [police] catch a bunch of guys doing it, they would probably give you a warning, 99% of the time, they wouldn’t even care. (M12)

I don’t even think that the guy would have even went to the police because, ugh, what are you going to say. I am standing on the street being a prostitute and this guy walked up and kicked the shit out of me. So what are you doing standing on the corner being a male prostitute? (M5)

In general the subjects believed that the police would not be interested, however, there was also the belief that the legal ramifications would be minimal. For example, one subject (M5) stated that “The most it [vehicular harassment] would be is creating a public disturbance.”

Resident assistants were not seen as capable guardians in the prevention of anti-gay behaviour. Subjects who resided in university residences believed that only the most extreme form of anti-gay behaviour [physical harassment] would be punished or condemned.

They joke around it when he (R.A.) is there but he doesn't take part. The guys know the position that he is in and he really can't say anything. He wouldn't do anything unless it was like actually gay bashing. (M1)

Well, I think as long as no one is kind of what do you call it (Beating) yeah that kind of stuff. I don't think he (R.A.) would give that much attention, just like bugging him and leaving notes and stuff, he doesn't pay attention. (M11)

One subject (M12) reported that his R.A. spoke out against harassing notes left on a perceived gay male's door. The R.A. was subsequently victimized by floor members leaving harassing notes on his door.

Our R.A. is kind of pissed at it [note writing] but, like, the R.A. didn't like it, but, like somebody left a note on his door and he didn't like it and he said to stop writing these notes, because it is kind of getting stupid. You know, but after awhile it stopped, but it is starting up again... The guys are just crazy. (M12)

Teachers were also not viewed as capable guardians. One subject stated that teachers never got involved in preventing anti-gay behaviour and she believed it wasn't their responsibility.

The teachers never got into anything, you're old enough to handle your own problem.(F7)

In addition, guardianship is affected by the number of offenders and the number of victims. For example, perpetrators of anti-gay behaviour will attack or harass gay men or lesbians if they are alone or in a smaller group. It would be rare for a single perpetrator to attack or harass a group of gay men or lesbians. In all the incidents, the subject outnumbered the victim(s). This behaviour can be viewed as mutually reinforcing for the subject. The event created excitement with little risk of retaliation. The event also validated the subjects as valued members of their peer group. In anti-gay behaviour the outnumbering of victims is a very safe and makes the incident easier to perform which relates to the concept of minimal effort.

## **Minimal Effort**

To be maximally pleasurable, events should require minimal effort. Minimal effort reflected the types of behaviour that were conducted. The easiest to perform was the most common and the hardest to perform was the least common type of incident. In this study, the most common type of behaviour was derision. Derision is the easiest type of anti-gay behaviour to perform. It is easier to joke or insult gays and lesbians behind their backs than directly to their faces. The subject does not have to find a victim and feels less guilt about his/her action. Derision is also common everyday behaviour that is relatively risk free. The least common behaviour was written harassment. It can be argued that it could take the most effort and time. One subject (M2) claimed that he had “better things to do than write stupid things on walls.” He was implying that it would take time to write and he did not have that kind of time. Another subject (M5) felt that written harassment was impractical. He believed that if you were going to insult someone it should be to their face so that you can see the immediate result. (which relates to rapidity) and that it would take time to wait for the reaction if you wrote an insult on a bathroom wall. It could also take skill, as the subject that reported writing harassing notes and writing graffiti on desks reported that they would respond to other notes. They would be in a “competition” and were trying to get back (or tease) other peers. It could be argued that the subject may have had to think about what to write and take time to formulate his thoughts to ensure a good response.

The other types of anti-gay behaviour also required minimal effort. For example, vehicular harassment was more common than verbal harassment. Partly because vehicular would be easier to perform. The subject would be able to blame others in the car for his/her actions which would reduce feelings of guilt. Face to face interaction (verbal harassment) with gay men and lesbians (especially

strangers) would create tension, anxiety and uncertainty about outcomes. In all six of the incidents of verbal harassment, the subjects knew the possible reactions of the victim to victimization. Subjects stated that they had viewed other's making fun of the victim and there were not any negative consequences or retaliation.

They wouldn't fight back or just ignore us. (M1)

Sometimes he would react and say things but most times he didn't do anything.(M14)

The incidents of physical harassment also required minimal effort, there was little in the way of planning involved. One subject (M5) admitted to "looking for trouble" in one of the incidents, however, the other incidents were unplanned in large part quick reactions to events that were deemed inappropriate or personally troubling. These subjects did not take any time or measures to go out and consciously attack a gay man or lesbians. Even in the incident that the subject went looking for trouble, he claimed that he had to walk past the male prostitutes on his way home from the bars. He was not going out of his way to verbally or physically attack the gay men.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION**

The results of chapter four indicate that there are five major attitudes towards homosexuals which include: repulsion, fear/discomfort, moral/religious righteousness, and conditional acceptance. These attitudes are not singular concepts but are interrelated. An interesting question emerges out of these results, that is how do we deconstruct or tear apart these attitudes? There has been considerable debate over strategies for reducing negative attitudes directed at minority groups. One such debate is tolerance versus acceptance.

#### **TOLERANCE OR ACCEPTANCE?**

Education of potential homophobes and full fledged homophobes is essential in the reduction of anti-gay attitudes. Although anti-gay attitudes are not the only factor in the event of anti-gay behaviour, anti-gay attitudes do play a role in the justification and rationalization for the anti-gay acts. It is important to teach young people(and adults) that anti-gay behaviour is not acceptable and that gays should not be devalued and minimized. The concept of tolerance has been the predominant tool in reduction of prejudicial attitudes. In Webster's dictionary tolerance means "a fair and objective attitude toward those whose opinions, practises, race, religion, nationality, etc. differ from one's own." In this view, tolerance implies exclusion and difference, in essence tolerance promotes the homo/heterosexual binary that queer theorists believe is at the core of homophobia. Sedgwick (1990) contends that "the homo/heterosexual figure is a master cultural trope marking not only sexual definitions but categorical pairings such as secrecy/disclosure, knowledge/ignorance, private/public, masculine/feminine, majority/minority, innocence/initiation, natural/artificial, same/difference, health/illness, growth/decadence, urbane/provincial"(Seidman, 1997:133).



Tolerance introduces the division of right and wrong. From a tolerance perspective heterosexuality is viewed as right or good, while homosexual is viewed as wrong or bad. Proponents of tolerance claim that as long as homosexuals remain on the fringe of heterosexual society, as long as the homo/heterosexual binary is enforced, then gays can be tolerated.

Education should encourage acceptance of gays and lesbians and the lifestyle in which they choose to live and an acceptance of difference. So how do we promote acceptance? The promotion of multiculturalist ideals of diversity and equality can be important contributions in the acceptance of lesbians and gay men. Multiculturalism means "that everyone has a right to their beliefs, private practices and a right to state their beliefs and opinions while granting others the same rights" (Samuel and Schachhuber, 1995). Multiculturalism means the full participation in all aspects of society for all members of society regardless of culture, ethnic, or national origin, religion, race, and colour. It is important to recognize lesbians and gay men as a unique group that are a fundamental part of society. A fully integrated lesbian and gay culture can add even more diversity to a mosaic society, in which many cultures and viewpoints are intertwined and appreciated.

Another solution is to present discussion groups in the high school and university environments. Discussion groups should involve two-way interaction; homophobes should be able to express their views without reprisal or fear. This is important because their concerns and feelings can only be addressed if there is an understanding of their viewpoint. Many times homophobia is built through ignorance, so it is very important to understand where they are coming from, in order to educate them on their prejudice. Some homophobes do not believe that they hold prejudice and do not believe that their behaviour is harmful. Gay panellists and students would interact and discuss point of views without forcing opinions on each other. It is important that discussion groups are held

often because only by repeated exposure will the students truly understand a gay and lesbian perspective.

To further promote acceptance, it is important to have gay and lesbian material included in school curriculum. In junior high school and high school, students should learn about gay and lesbian history, gay and lesbian identities and should also be taught the consequences of anti-gay victimization. Personal stories and personal experiences of gay survivors should be introduced into the classroom. This would give students the ability to empathize with the survivors. Putting a face on a crime survivor can be a powerful tool in preventing homophobic activity. In other words, young adults may realize that seemingly harmless activity has real consequences for the victim.

In the university environment a course on gay and lesbian studies should be a mandatory class, especially for students who major in the humanities. In sociology theory courses, queer theory should be included in the course content. Queer theory is not a minority theory, that is exclusive to a minority group, queer theory can aid in the knowledge of sexuality and the organization of social structures. In essence, education on gay and lesbian issues should not be on the periphery of the school environment but should be part of the curriculum. Attitudes about homosexuality are based on too much ignorance and it is time that some light is shed on the issues that surround gay and lesbian worlds. Queer theorists may object because the notion of a homosexual identity reifies the homo/heterosexual binary, but it is important for gays and lesbians to oppose heterosexism and homophobia. To remain silent would push more gays and lesbians into the "closet" and disenfranchise an entire group.

## **POLITICAL CORRECTNESS: A DANGEROUS IDEOLOGY?**

The results of chapter five, suggest that attitudes towards lesbians and gay men are influenced by several factors which include language, stereotypes, contact with lesbians and gay men, parents, peers and societal forces such as media, religion, education, political correctness, heterosexual hegemony and cultural/geographical background. The role of political correctness was an important theme throughout the study and needs to be discussed further.

Opponents of political correctness view minorities as powerful and dangerous because they enforce harmful new ideas to the larger society. Right-wing pundits claim that political correctness is a real danger to society. I agree but for a different reason, political correctness does not empower minority groups nor does it silence the opinions of people. Enemies of gays and lesbians use “political correctness” to spout anti-gay rhetoric. Opponents of gays and lesbians claim that lesbians and gay men have too many rights and they attribute these rights to the emergence of political correctness. In essence negative attitudes can be considered a backlash to political correctness which is viewed as an oppressive ideology by homophobes. The concept of “political correctness” permits prejudiced individuals to justify hatred or negativity, to oppose real and meaningful gains of individuals of minority groups who have been systematically oppressed and discriminated against. “Political correctness” enables prejudiced individuals to oppose people who they deem unsuitable for inclusion into mainstream society. Political correctness enables individuals to speak out as supposed “voices of reason”, sanctions the preaching of hate, and then justifies hate as a necessary part of a moral and just society.

## **DO ATTITUDES SHAPE BEHAVIOUR?**

The results of chapter six suggest that there are different types of anti-gay behaviour and that there are different motivations and/or circumstances that induce such behaviour. There are two themes that need to be discussed. First it is imperative to question whether attitudes shape behaviour? and second the female role in anti-gay behaviour should be discussed.

Anti-gay attitudes are not necessary for an incident of anti-gay behaviour to occur. However, anti-gay attitudes are very important for the rationalization or justification of anti-gay behaviours. Perpetrators of anti-gay behaviour are able to express the belief that their behaviour is normal, everyday behaviour that the victim deserved. In this study, it was found that anti-gay behaviours were the result of three interrelated factors that include: the group mentality and interaction, the definition of the victim(s); and the definition of the situation.

In virtually every incident of anti-gay behaviour, the subjects report that they did not act alone, but acted in the company of peers. Essentially, the group and group mentality are instrumental in the commission anti-gay behaviour. Anti-gay behaviour is mutually reinforcing behaviour that strengthens the heterosexuality of the group member, defines homosexuality as improper, and acknowledges gays and lesbians as outcasts to the group. For males, the area of femininity is especially salient to avoid, as femininity implies homosexuality and to act feminine or to subscribe to feminine norms is severely prohibited. Part of this anti-homosexuality mentality is the notion that there exists a clear line of difference between homosexuality and heterosexuality. Anyone perceived or suspected of being different, whether gay or not, is labelled as gay. This enables male youths to make sense of their roles and understand the complex variations of human behaviour that exist in society. The word "fag" or "queer", does not necessarily mean homosexuality, but means difference

and implies exclusion from the group. The group norms are enforced by “ritual insults” that promote both inclusion and exclusion to the group.

The definition of the victim is also an important determinant in anti-gay behaviour. In the incidents, victims are targeted because they are perceived as suitable targets who are defined as weak and vulnerable. Victims are outcast, ostracised and taunted because of perceived differences. Perpetrators of anti-gay behaviour believe that their actions are normative and justified because the definition of the victim enables the act to occur. In a particularly enlightening statement on prejudice, Young-Bruehl (1996:3) contends that “prejudices manifested by slurs, acts of discrimination, attacks, are followed by prejudices, not necessarily the same ones, manifested in rationalizations, self-serving descriptions, denials, commentaries, often ones designed to discredit the victims’ truthfulness or belittle their pain.”

Finally, the definition of the situation is an important component of anti-gay behaviour. The situation has to be conducive to the event. There has to be a lack of capable guardianship, the presence of rewards and the absence of punishments. Incidents of anti-gay behaviour lack proper guardianship, whether that guardianship comes in the form of parents, teachers, peers, resident assistants, teachers or police. In general, society does not condemn anti-gay behaviour; many instances of anti-gay behaviour, such as derision, avoidance, verbal and vehicular assault are minimized. Physical Harassment or “gay bashing” is perceived by many heterosexuals as the only type of anti-gay behaviour that should be recognized and controlled. The other forms are believed to be part of growing up or maturing in society. It is maintained that negative language has always existed and will continue to exist, so there is no sense getting upset about it.

Presence of rewards and lack of punishment have to be present. In a group environment, rewards entail the affirmation of group membership and identity. Thus, to make fun of gays and lesbians, to ostracize and to avoid gays and lesbians, is a positive reward because it signals group membership and gender identity. The absence of punishment is important because if sanctions exist, then the rewards would be countered. Anti-gay behaviour will not occur in areas where it is deemed to be inappropriate behaviour or where it is discouraged.

### **THE FEMALE ROLE: ACTIVE OR PASSIVE?**

As expected the research showed that males were more active in the commission of anti-gay behaviour. This is due to the differential socialization patterns of females and males. Females may not want to participate in extreme acts of anti-gay behaviour because it is defined to be part of the male realm. Some females do not want to defy a passive role for fear of being labelled a "dyke." Lesbians are stereotyped as mannish feminists that defy the natural gender role of women, in which, a woman is encouraged to be passive and deferential to males. This does not mean that females cannot engage in anti-gay behaviour, but their participation depends on the nature of the activity and the actors involved. For example, if there is a male involved, the female will take on a passive role and possibly encourage (subtly or non-subtly) the male behaviour. This was especially evident in incidents of vehicular harassment in which males took an active role in the harassment. However in anti-gay incidents that do not involve males, females have the ability to act as aggressively as males and can inflict as much psychological damage to victims as their male counterparts. Female perpetrators of anti-gay behaviour can be just as destructive, hurtful and insensitive as their male counterparts. Unlike males, females may not use anti-gay language to "ritually insult" other females. Females are more apt to engage misogynist language such as "slut", "whore", and "tramp" to define

other females as unacceptable or undesirable members of the group. It is interesting to note that some females engage in “ritual insults” with male friends by using the word “fag” or “queer”, to get “a rise out of males” which subsequently presents the image of the female as a potentially powerful member the group. The idea is that the female can effectively attack the core of male identity, that is masculinity.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study is important as it specifically examines homophobe’s attitudes towards lesbians and gay men. The study is unique as it examines the freely expressed attitudes and revelations of anti-gay behaviour among a group of homophobic individuals Unlike surveys, this study enables respondents to explain their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. Thus, we are able to understand their views and perspectives. This is essential as we are able to get to the root of the problem which may enable us to develop strategies to reduce homophobic attitudes and behaviours. This study is also important as it introduced the various influences that affect attitudes. We can recognize that anti-gay attitudes and behaviours are not inherent, but are created, shaped and maintained by numerous factors. This can aid in reducing anti-gay attitudes and behaviours by making homophobes aware that their attitudes are not ingrained but are variable.

The theories introduced to help explain attitudes and behaviour, are also very important. They are useful for many reasons. First , Social Constructionism is important because it shows us that attitudes are not inherent or natural reactions, but are social constructions that are created, shaped and maintained by several factors and influences. With social constructionism we are able to understand how language, stereotypes and socialization agents such as the media, parents, peers affect our beliefs. Second, Queer theory is an useful framework in analyzing homophobia,

specifically, Queer theory shows us how heterosexual hegemony is a force in the organization of society and how differences are maintained by boundaries of difference.

Third, the Criminology theories are important in addressing anti-gay behaviour. They show us that other motivations (other than homophobia) are important determinants of anti-gay behaviour. Routine Activities and the Theory of Criminality explain such factors as the number of perpetrators, number of victims and location of incident. Differential Association, Social Learning and Role theory aid in the explanation of how perpetrators learn the behaviour and how gender roles are an essential part of the learning process. Miller's focal concerns, and Sykes and Matza's techniques of neutralization help explain other possible motivation and the justifications or rationalization for the anti-gay incidents.

## **DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

There are many areas that need to be explored in future research. First, researchers should examine how children develop anti-gay attitudes. This would enable us to understand what are the most important determinants of anti-gay socialization. It would be salient to examine how common anti-gay taunts and teasing is in the school environment. Second, research should be conducted on heterosexuals with positive attitudes. This would enable researchers to examine differences between homophobes and non-homophobes. This may enable us to provide solutions for reducing negative attitudes. Third, it is very important to further examine the consequences of anti-gay victimization. It is important to look at coping strategies and to display how destructive anti-gay behaviour can be to the victim. It is especially important to study the effects of anti-gay language because in many instances the use of anti-gay language is minimized. Fourth, most research is male centered. Thus, it



is very important to study anti-lesbianism to examine its connection to anti-femininity or anti-woman attitudes.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this study found that repulsion, fear/discomfort, religious/moral righteousness, abnormality, and conditional acceptance were the major tenets of homophobic attitudes. However, the anti-gay attitudes present in the subjects were only a symptom of a heterosexist society. A society which defines gays and lesbians as a devalued minority that is consequently vulnerable to acts of violence, exclusion, discrimination and ridicule. The study found that negative attitudes were influenced by stereotypes, contact with lesbians and gay men, parents, peers, and social forces that include, the media, education, cultural/geographical background, heterosexual hegemony and the emergence of “political correctness.”

In addition, this research project found that subjects were involved in a wide variety of anti-gay behaviours that include: derision, avoidance, vehicular harassment, verbal harassment and physical harassment. These behaviours tend not to be sanctioned by societal norms, values or institutions. These behaviours are mutually reinforced by group behaviour and mentalities.

This study found that anti-gay language exists on an everyday basis, and is a prevalent phenomenon that is a very popular form of expression. Listen carefully and you will observe that anti-gay language occurs in many areas and is very seldom sanctioned. By using this language, by joking about homosexuals, we are saying that it is okay to hate, okay to hate fellow human beings whose only “transgression” is that they choose to love another same sex person. Anti-gay attitudes and behaviours are not inherent to societal norms and institutions. They are not “natural” reactions

towards homosexuality and they are not congenital to “normal” heterosexuals. They are social constructions that are subject to modification and deconstruction.

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## Appendix A

### SOCIOLOGY SURVEY

**My name is Ken Dowler and I am a graduate student in Sociology. I am asking you to take part in research that will contribute to an M.A. thesis. Your participation is completely voluntary.**

**I am asking you to fill out a survey on attitudes towards gay men and lesbians. Please answer the following statements as honestly and quickly as possible.**

**At the end of the survey I am asking you to volunteer to discuss your views on homosexuals. Anyone who is selected to be interviewed will get a couple of slices of pizza and a pop (or 5 dollars). Anything you say will be kept strictly confidential and you will not be identified in the thesis.**

***Your participation is greatly appreciated.***

***Thank you.***

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1) Lesbians just can't fit into our society.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2) A woman's homosexuality should not be a cause for job discrimination in any situation.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3) Female homosexuality is detrimental to society because it breaks down the natural divisions between the sexes.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
4) Laws regulating private, consenting lesbian behaviour should be loosened.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
5) Female homosexuality is a sin.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
6) If a man has homosexual feelings, he should do everything he can to overcome them.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
7) I would not be too upset if I learned that my son were a homosexual.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
8) Homosexual behaviour between two men is just plain wrong.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
9) The idea of male homosexual marriages seems ridiculous to me.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
10) Male homosexuality is merely a different kind of lifestyle that should not be condemned.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
11) The growing number of lesbians indicates a decline in morals.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
12) Female homosexuality in itself is no problem, but what society makes of it can be a problem.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
13) Female homosexuality is a threat to many of our basic social institutions.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
14) Female homosexuality is an inferior form of sexuality.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
15) Lesbians are sick.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
16) Male homosexual couples should not be allowed to adopt children the same as heterosexual couples.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
17) I think male homosexuals are disgusting.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
18) Male homosexuals should not be allowed to teach school.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
19) Male homosexuality is a perversion.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
20) Just as in other species, male homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in human men.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
21) I would feel nervous being in a group of homosexuals.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
22) I would feel uncomfortable if I learned my boss was a homosexual.	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]
23) I would feel uncomfortable if I learned my roommate was a homosexual.	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]
24) I am comfortable around gays and lesbians.	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]
25) Gays and lesbians set a bad example for children.	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]
26) Gays and lesbians should just stay in the closet.	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]
27) Gay men are effeminate (feminine)	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]
28) Lesbians are too masculine.	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]
29) Homosexuals try to seduce children.	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]
30) Homosexuals are responsible for the spread of AIDS.	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]

Please Circle your Gender:      Male      Female

---

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR FILLING OUT THIS SURVEY.

---

### THIS SECTION IS OPTIONAL

I would like to invite you to discuss your views on homosexuals. Interviews will last about an hour and will contribute to an MA thesis on attitudes towards homosexuals. Anyone who is selected to be interviewed will get a couple of slices of pizza and pop (or 5 dollars). Anything you say will be kept strictly confidential and you will not be identified in the thesis.

Name (first) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (last-optional) \_\_\_\_\_  
 phone-number \_\_\_\_\_  
 e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

I will try to get a hold of you as soon as possible. If you want more information, please feel free to contact me (Ken) at 253-1669 or e-mail me at [dowler@uwindsor.ca](mailto:dowler@uwindsor.ca)

## Appendix B

### Survey Results

Total Sample- 569

Male -189

Female -380

#### 1. Lesbians just can't fit into our society

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	4.4	7.9	42.5	39.2	6
Male	8.5	10.1	41.3	32.3	7.9
Female	2.4	6.8	43.2	42.6	5
Subjects					
Male	30	20	40	0	10
Female	20	30	40	0	10

#### 2. A woman's homosexuality should not be a cause for job discrimination in any situation.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	52.4	32	6.9	6.3	2.5
Male	37.6	38.6	9.5	11.1	3.2
Female	59.7	28.7	5.5	3.9	2.1
Subjects					
Male	50	0	30	20	0
Female	10	50	40	0	0

#### 3. Female homosexuality is detrimental to society because it breaks down the natural divisions between the sexes.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	6.9	15.6	35.9	22.8	18.8
Male	11.1	17.5	34.4	23.3	13.8
Female	4.7	14.7	36.6	22.6	21.3
Subjects					
Male	10	50	0	10	30
Female	40	40	0	0	20

**4. Laws regulating private, consenting lesbian behaviour should be loosened.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	11.8	36.7	21.3	8.3	22
Male	12.7	39.7	16.4	11.1	20.1
Female	6.8	23.7	35.3	11.3	22.9
Subjects					
Male	10	10	50	20	10
Female	0	10	60	20	10

**5. Female homosexuality is a sin.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	9.8	9.7	30.4	39.9	10.2
Male	12.2	10.6	33.9	32.8	10.6
Female	8.7	9.2	28.7	43.4	10
Subjects					
Male	30	10	40	0	20
Female	40	20	40	0	0

**6. If a man has homosexual feelings, he should do everything he can to overcome them.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	12	12	38.8	27.9	9.3
Male	23.3	19	33.3	9	15.3
Female	6.3	8.4	41.6	37.4	6.3
Subjects					
Male	50	20	20	0	10
Female	10	40	20	0	30

**7. I would not be too upset if I learned that my son were a homosexual.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	23	19.2	31.3	19.2	7.4
Male	4.2	15.9	23.8	40.7	15.3
Female	12.6	31.1	21.3	17.1	17.9
Subjects					
Male	0	10	20	60	10
Female	0	0	20	60	20

**8. Homosexual behaviour between two men is just plain wrong.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	17.2	14.9	37.4	23.4	7
Male	32.8	16.4	30.7	11.1	9
Female	9.5	14.2	40.8	29.5	6.1
Subjects					
Male	60	30	0	0	10
Female	30	50	10	10	0

**9. The idea of male homosexual marriages seems ridiculous to me.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	23	19.2	31.3	19.2	7.4
Male	38.1	22.2	23.3	10.1	6.3
Female	15.5	17.6	35.3	23.7	7.9
Subjects					
Male	60	30	0	0	10
Female	50	40	0	10	0

**10. Male homosexuality is merely a different kind of lifestyle that should not be condemned.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	24.6	38.7	18.8	12.5	5.4
Male	13.2	36.5	22.2	21.7	6.3
Female	30.3	39.7	17.1	7.9	5
Subjects					
Male	0	30	30	20	20
Female	0	30	40	30	0

**11. The growing number of lesbians indicates a decline in morals.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	6.9	9	43.4	31.1	9.7
Male	11.1	11.6	41.8	23.8	11.6
Female	4.7	7.6	44.2	34.7	8.7
Subjects					
Male	30	10	40	0	20
Female	20	30	20	0	30



**12. Female homosexuality in itself is no problem, but what society makes of it can be a problem.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
<b>Total -%</b>	26.9	48	14.4	4.7	6.9
<b>Male</b>	24.3	43.9	16.9	7.9	5.5
<b>Female</b>	28.2	50	13.2	3.2	
<b>Subjects</b>					
<b>Male</b>	10	40	10	20	20
<b>Female</b>	20	0	50	20	10

**13. Female homosexuality is a threat to many of our basic social institutions.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
<b>Total -%</b>	5.1	13.7	45	24.1	12.1
<b>Male</b>	10.1	15.3	40.7	24.9	9
<b>Female</b>	2.6	12.9	47.1	23.7	13.7
<b>Subjects</b>					
<b>Male</b>	40	30	10	0	20
<b>Female</b>	10	40	20	0	30

**14. Female homosexuality is an inferior form of sexuality.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
<b>Total -%</b>	5.4	11.4	39.4	23.2	20.6
<b>Male</b>	9	10.6	41.3	19.6	19.6
<b>Female</b>	3.7	11.8	38.4	25	21.1
<b>Subjects</b>					
<b>Male</b>	20	20	20	10	30
<b>Female</b>	0	50	20	0	30

**15. Lesbians are sick.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
<b>Total -%</b>	6.7	8.6	35.9	43.1	5.8
<b>Male</b>	9	5.3	40.2	37	8.5
<b>Female</b>	5.5	10.3	33.7	46.1	4.5
<b>Subjects</b>					
<b>Male</b>	20	0	40	20	20
<b>Female</b>	20	60	10	0	10

**16. Male homosexual couples should not be allowed to adopt children the same as heterosexual couples.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	24.4	16	26.2	17.2	16.2
Male	37	19.6	19	11.1	13.2
Female	18.2	14.2	29.7	20.3	17.6
Subjects					
Male	80	20	0	0	0
Female	70	20	0	0	10

**17. I think male homosexuals are disgusting.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	15.6	14.2	34.4	29.2	6.5
Male	33.9	18.5	24.3	14.8	8.5
Female	6.6	12.1	39.5	36.3	5.5
Subjects					
Male	80	20	0	0	10
Female	30	40	20	0	10

**18. Male homosexuals should not be allowed to teach school.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	8.1	4.6	36.7	44.6	6
Male	20.1	7.9	41.3	24.9	5.8
Female	2.1	2.9	34.5	54.5	6.1
Subjects					
Male	40	10	40	0	10
Female	10	10	60	20	0

**19. Male homosexuality is a perversion**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	10.9	11.1	32.2	31.5	14.4
Male	24.9	13.2	28	19	14.8
Female	3.9	10	34.2	37.6	14.2
Subjects					
Male	50	10	0	0	40
Female	30	10	30	0	30

20. Just as in other species, male homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in human men.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	13.2	35.7	15.8	14.9	20.4
Male	5.8	28	15.9	27.5	22.8
Female	16.8	39.5	15.8	8.7	19.2
Subjects					
Male	0	10	20	50	20
Female	0	10	10	40	40

21. I would feel nervous being in a group of homosexuals.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	13.7	17.8	30.8	25.1	12.7
Male	30.7	24.9	21.2	14.3	9
Female	5.3	14.2	35.5	30.5	14.5
Subjects					
Male	50	30	10	0	10
Female	30	30	30	10	0

22. I would feel uncomfortable if I learned that my boss was a homosexual.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	10.4	13.9	41.7	26	8.1
Male	19.6	21.7	36	14.3	8.5
Female	5.8	10	44.5	31.8	7.9
Subjects					
Male	40	40	10	10	0
Female	20	40	30	0	10

23. I would feel uncomfortable if I learned my roommate was a homosexual.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	20	27.6	24.1	17.4	10.9
Male	34.9	30.2	18.5	8.5	7.9
Female	12.6	26.3	26.8	21.8	12.4
Subjects					
Male	70	30	0	0	0
Female	20	50	20	0	10

**24. I am comfortable around gays and lesbians.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	18.6	34.6	18.6	9.7	18.5
Male	10.6	27.5	27.5	16.9	17.5
Female	22.6	38.2	14.2	6.1	18.9
Subjects					
Male	0	0	50	30	20
Female	0	30	30	20	20

**25. Gays and lesbians set a bad example for children.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	10.5	17	37.1	25.3	10
Male	16.9	22.2	32.8	16.4	11.6
Female	7.4	14.5	39.2	29.7	9.2
Subjects					
Male	30	50	20	0	0
Female	30	60	10	0	0

**26. Gays and Lesbians should just stay in the closet.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	7.4	9.3	41.7	32	9.7
Male	16.9	16.4	40.7	14.8	11.1
Female	2.6	5.8	42.1	40.5	8.9
Subjects					
Male	20	40	10	0	30
Female	0	50	30	0	20

**27. Gay Men are effeminate**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total -%	10.7	26.4	35.1	10.7	17
Male	19.6	30.2	24.3	10.6	15.3
Female	6.3	24.5	40.5	10.8	17.9
Subjects					
Male	60	10	10	0	20
Female	20	50	20	0	10

**28. Lesbians are too masculine.**

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
<b>Total -%</b>	5.4	15.5	47.5	14.4	17.2
<b>Male</b>	10.6	16.9	43.4	12.7	16.4
<b>Female</b>	2.9	14.7	49.5	15.3	17.6
<b>Subjects</b>					
<b>Male</b>	20	20	40	0	20
<b>Female</b>	10	30	40	10	10

**29. Homosexuals try to seduce children.**

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
<b>Total -%</b>	2.3	3	31.6	52.2	10.9
<b>Male</b>	5	6.3	33.9	40.2	14.5
<b>Female</b>	.8	1.3	30.5	58.2	9.2
<b>Subjects</b>					
<b>Male</b>	10	10	30	20	30
<b>Female</b>	0	0	20	30	50

**30. Homosexuals are responsible for the spread of AIDS.**

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
<b>Total -%</b>	4.4	11.2	35.3	35.5	13.5
<b>Male</b>	9	16.4	37.6	27	10.1
<b>Female</b>	2.1	8.7	34.2	39.7	15.3
<b>Subjects</b>					
<b>Male</b>	10	30	20	10	30
<b>Female</b>	30	30	10	20	10

## Appendix C

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### Introductory Statement:

Pro gay groups have spokespersons but in a politically correct environment nobody wants to hear how other people feel about homosexuals or what their experiences are. Would you mind just talking to me about your feelings about homosexuals? As well as talking to me about any anti-gay behaviour that you know about or have witnessed?

1) Do you know any gay men?

If yes:

- a) How do you know him?
- b) How do you feel about him? (Why?)
- c) Do you feel this way about all gay men? (Why?)
- d) In general how do you feel about gays? Where do you think that you learned these feelings? Do you think that your feelings or beliefs will change? (ie. Do you think that you would feel differently about gay men?) Why or Why not?

If no:

- a) Why not?
- b) How do you feel about gay men? (Why?)
- c) In general how do you feel about gays? Where do you think that you learned these feelings? Do you think that your feelings or beliefs will change? (ie. Do you think that you would feel differently about gay men?) Why or Why not?

Ask same questions about lesbians.

---

2. What do your friends think about homosexuals?

(Demarcate lesbians and gay men)

- a) Why do you think they feel this way?
  - b) How do they communicate these views to you? (ie. How do you know that they feel this way?)
- 

3. What do your parents think about homosexuals?

(Demarcate lesbians and gay men)

- a) Why do you think they feel this way?
- b) How do they communicate these views to you? (ie. How do you know that they feel this way?)

4. What do you think is the difference between homosexuals and heterosexuals?  
 (Demarcate lesbians and gay men)
- a) probe into roles, attitudes and behavioural differences
  - b) probe into masculinity and femininity, ie. Ideal man or ideal woman.
- 

The next questions are about a part of your life in which we know little about, things that you might have witnessed or done that could get you into trouble with the law. Some of these questions may be difficult to answer, they may be things you have told very few people. But if I am going to understand your experiences with gay men and lesbians I need you to answer as honestly as possible... I want to make it clear that whatever you say is strictly confidential and that you have the right not to answer any questions.

Please don't give me names of anybody or specific locations.

5. Have you ever heard comments or jokes about gays and lesbians such as queer, faggot, dyke etc.? Or have you made these comments or jokes about gays or lesbians?
- a) In what settings do you hear (or say) these jokes or language?
  - b) Do you use these words to describe heterosexuals? Why? Under what circumstances do you use this language to describe heterosexuals?
  - c) Do you think that this language is harmless. Why or Why not?
  - d) Do your parents use this language? Please describe.
  - e) Do your friends use this language? Please describe.
  - f) Do you know anybody who has ever written derogatory remarks about gays and lesbians on bathroom walls, desks, posters, etc. If yes (describe) Have you ever? If yes describe.
  - g) Do you know anybody who has damaged personal property of a gay man or lesbian or someone perceived as gay? For example scratching cars, breaking windows, graffiti, or vandalism? Have you ever? If yes (describe using other guide questions) If no , Why not?
- 

6. Have you ever heard a gay man (or perceived) being called a fag or a queer? (or other terms) Have you ever witnessed a gay man being teased? Or have you ever did this?

If yes:

Please describe (most recent)

- a) What words/actions were used?
- b) Where did the incident(s) happen? (In general terms, do not give me specific locations.)
- c) At what time did the incident happen? (At night or in the day?) Were you drinking?
- d) Were there other people involved? How did they react?
- e) Did you know the victim?

- f) Why do you think that you and your friends did this?
- g) How did this make you feel?
- h) Did you ever have any regrets about what happened? Would you do it again?
- i) How did you friends feel about the incident? (or would feel?)
- j) How did your ( or would) family feel about the incident?
- k) Were you worried that the police would get involved? Was there any charges laid?

If no:

- a) Why not?
- b) Do you think that it is ever acceptable to tease make fun of or insult a gay man?

Ask same questions about lesbians.

7. Have you ever heard about or witnessed people throwing objects at or spitting at a gay man? How about a gay man being followed or chased? Have you ever did this? (Give example of being in a car.)

If yes:

Please describe (most recent)

- a) what did you (or they) do?
- b) Where did the incident(s) happen? (In general terms, do not give me specific locations.)
- c) At what time did the incident happen? (At night or in the day?) Were you drinking?
- d) Were there other people involved? How did they react?
- e) Did you know the victim?
- f) Why do you think that you and your friends did this?
- g) How did this make you feel?
- h) Did you ever have any regrets about what happened? Would you do it again?
- i) How did you friends feel about the incident? (or would feel?)
- j) How did your ( or would) family feel about the incident?
- k) Were you worried that the police would get involved? Was there any charges laid?

If no:

- a) Why not?
- b) Do you think that it is ever acceptable to do this?

Ask same questions about lesbians.



8. Do you know anyone who has punched, hit, kicked, or shoved a gay man or lesbian?  
Have you ever witnessed this? Have you ever been involved?

If yes:

Please describe (most recent)

- a) what did you (or they) do?
- b) Where did the incident(s) happen? (In general terms, do not give me specific locations.)
- c) At what time did the incident happen? (At night or in the day?) Were you drinking?
- d) Were there other people involved? How did they react?
- e) Did you know the victim?
- f) Why do you think that you and your friends did this?
- g) How did this make you feel?
- h) Did you ever have any regrets about what happened? Would you do it again?
- i) How did you friends feel about the incident? (or would feel?)
- j) How did your ( or would) family feel about the incident?
- k) Were you worried that the police would get involved? Was there any charges laid?

If no:

- a) Why not?
- b) Do you think that it is ever acceptable to do this?

Ask same questions about lesbians

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9. Is there anything that we have not discussed that you feel is important to discuss?  
(Give them time to think.) Or is there anything that you want to clarify?
-

## **Appendix D**

### **INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

You have been asked to participate in a study on attitudes towards homosexuals. I am interviewing men and women about their views and encounters with lesbians and gay men.

The following interview has some questions that ask about your knowledge of anti-gay behaviours and possible participation in this anti-gay behaviour. Some of these questions may be difficult for you to answer; they may be things that you have told very few people. But if we are going to understand your experiences with gay men and lesbians I need you to answer as honestly as possible.

The interview should take about one hour. The interview will be tape recorded. Anything you say in the interview is strictly confidential. Your name will not be associated with your comments. I will not include any information that could identify you or other individuals on the transcripts (written versions) I make of these tapes. The tapes will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet in my home. After the transcription the tapes will be destroyed.

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. You do not have to answer any questions. You may choose not to answer specific questions. You are free to end the interview at any point.

If you have any further questions about the interview, please call me at (519) 253-1669 or email me at : [dowler@uwindsor.ca](mailto:dowler@uwindsor.ca)

This project has been cleared by the University of Windsor Ethics Committee.

Please feel free to contact Dr. Alan Hall (Head of Ethics Committee) at 253-4232 Ext. 2202

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Please sign the form on the next page, if you are willing to participate in this interview. I will leave one copy of this sheet with you and take another with me. Everyone that I interview will get five dollars to thank you for your participation.

## **Consent form**

I hereby give my informed consent to be interviewed. I understand the nature of my involvement, and I have been assured that my answers will be kept strictly confidential. At no point during the future analysis will I be identified by name. I further understand that any quotations from this interview will appear without anything that identifies who I am.

I am aware that I have the right to refuse to answer any questions and that I may also withdraw from this interview at any time. Finally, I understand that there is no risk to me stemming from this interview.

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank You**

**Researcher:** Ken Dowler, Graduate Student, Dept. of Sociology

**Advisors:** Dr. Barry Adam , Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology

Dr. Stephen Baron, Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology

Dr. Henry Minton, Dept. of Psychology

## **Appendix E**

### **ETHICS COMMITTEE CONCERNS**

professor should be absent from the room when requesting volunteers. This is aimed at ensuring that there is no compulsion to participate.

Please discuss these suggestions with your supervisor and committee and contact me if you have any questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. H. Lee' or similar, written in a cursive style.

## **APPENDIX F**

### **APPENDAGE TO ETHICS**

**This appendage is to address the concerns of the ethics committee. The concerns that were brought forward were deception, risk to the researcher and confidentiality. I believe that I have confronted these concerns in consultation with my committee and with Dr. Mary Lou Dietz (former Head of the Department).**

**The issue of deception can be addressed by asking the subject before the interview. “Do you consider yourself pro/anti or neutral towards gays and lesbians?” And then asking “Would you mind just talking to me about any anti-gay behaviour that you know about or you have witnessed?” At this point I will add a further comment to put the subject at ease and to facilitate participation. I will state “Pro gay groups have spokespersons but in a politically correct environment nobody wants to hear how other people feel about homosexuals or what their experiences are”. This will reduce risk to myself as the subject will be able to trust me. Or at the very least perceive me as a person who wants to hear their “side of the story.”**

**The subject will be fully aware of the direction of the research before the start of the research. They will know up front that we will be discussing anti-gay attitudes and behaviours. At this point I will have the subjects read and sign the informed consent form. I have made some revisions to the original informed consent form (which was submitted to the Ethics committee) in order to address deception and confidentiality I would like to address the issue of risk to myself. I believe that the benefits of the research outweigh any risk that I may encounter. Research on gay bashers is scarce and I**

believe that I am an excellent candidate to do this type of research. I have also modified my interview questions to make them less confrontational (see interview guide). I don't ask about specific behaviours. I ask them about their knowledge of and possible participation in anti-gay behaviours. In addition I am adding a statement before I start asking questions on behaviour. The statement reads: The next questions are about a part of your life in which we know little about, things that you might have witnessed or done that could get you into trouble with the law. Some of these questions may be difficult to answer, they may be things you have told very few people. But if I am going to understand your experiences with gay men and lesbians I need you to answer as honestly as possible...I want to make it clear that whatever you say is strictly confidential and that you have the right not to answer any questions.

The final issue I want to address is confidentiality. I want to make it clear to the Ethics committee, what my view of confidentiality entails. In the informed consent form I state that the subject will not be identified. I believe that it is my ethical responsibility, to uphold the trust that the subjects have placed in me. Despite the nature of the subjects behaviour, I will preserve confidentiality.

In conclusion, I have revised my interview guide, informed consent form and I have added statements that I will verbally administer before the start of the interview.

Thank you

Ken Dowler

## Appendix G

### GRAFFITI ON BATHROOM WALLS

Dec 13/97

Room CHS Wg-12

I don't care what you fags do, but I don't want to see you on T.V. or elsewhere whining you have AIDS and want us normal people to save your worthless lives.

I can't believe I'm sitting on the same toilette a queer sat on! Put extra toilette paper on the seat.

Change the world KILL A QUEER!

It's a good thing University opened up your mind or you would have wrote: Change the world kill two queers!

Fuck gay rights. Gays should all be put on a fucking island. If they want to be equal. How the fuck can you faggots fight for equality when your not FUCKING EQUAL!! Think about that you fucking queer!

Room CHS Wg-14

Faggots must die!!

All fags and people with AIDS should be put on a island and shot.

*(Response) Your are narrow minded.*

*(Response) You are a cocksucking bleeding heart liberal who will die with all the fags.*

I hope all Queers will get AIDS and DIE.

*(Response) If I were gay or my brother was, I would hunt you down. Although your probably gay yourself, most homophobe are.*

*(Response) Admit it you are gay, so is your brother, your dog, and your father and your mother likes to eat out little girls.*



### **VITA AUCTORIS**

**Ken Dowler was born in 1970 in Palmerston, Ontario. He graduated from Norwell District Secondary School in 1989. From there he went on to the University of Windsor where he obtained a B.A. in Criminology in 1996. He is a candidate for the Master's degree in Sociology at the University of Windsor and will graduate in the fall of 1998.**

**He is currently a part-time support worker with Windsor Community Living and is attending Wayne State University in September 1998 where he plans to complete his Ph.D. in Sociology.**